RUSSIA'S WOMEN

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CHAPTER I

THE purpose of this book is to give a clearer and simpler conception of the destiny of Russia, through the story of Russia's women.

Among the many books that have been written about Russia, studies of the history of Russian women are lacking; and yet it is important, not only for Russians, but also for other nations to understand the historical development of the life of Russian women. This is important first because the destiny of its women is indissolubly connected with the destiny of the nation. Secondly, because, in spite of the fact that throughout history the Russian women have been subjected to extremely bad conditions, they do not stand lower than women of other nations. Thirdly, because their fight for freedom and for equal rights with men shows their inherent love for independence, which cannot be crushed though it may be subdued for a time.

Special emphasis must be laid upon another

point of interest to women throughout the world and to American women in particular, since their part in the growth of the woman's movement has been of the greatest. This point is that the Revolution offered to Russian women their second opportunity to express themselves and to use their influence in molding Russian life. It may not be generally known that their first chance was in the middle of the last century, and that, through being unprepared, they failed to seize it.

To understand this and also the part which Russian women played in the revolutionary movement of their country it is necessary to begin with Russia's history in relation to the status of her women before the time when Russia was converted to Christianity.

Russians belong to the Aryan race. In ancient times they were known as Slavs, as they are part of the Slavonic family; but from the middle of the ninth century they were called Russians or men of Rus.

The exact time when the Slavs came to the Eastern European plain is not known. Some historians think that they began to settle in the South in the fourth century. But most agree that the great bulk of the Slavs who colonized Russia descended from the Carpathian mountains sometime between the sixth and the seventh centuries. However, Russian

history may be considered as beginning only about the middle of the ninth century.

Annals and epic songs tell us that in heathen times the Slav woman enjoyed considerable freedom. She had equal rights and opportunities with men, sometimes cooperating, sometimes fighting with them in order to provide for life. She was independent and warlike to such a degree that often she was considered stronger than the men. The *bylinas*—epic songs—represent such a type of woman in the significant figure of the woman—amazon, the bold *polyanitza*, the warrior-maiden.

One such woman is pictured in the *bylina* of *Ilya and Hero Svyatogor.* (Isabel Hapgood):

". . . and after a space that fair heroic woman took Ilya and put him in her husband's deep pocket" . . .

Another epic song speaks of such a woman whom the *bogatyr* (mighty knight) Dobrynya met in the open plain (*Dobrynya and the Dragon*, by I. Hapgood):

". . . Dobrynya followed again after the tracks and came upon a hero in the open plain, riding in a woman's garb upon a fair and goodly horse.

" 'Eh!' quoth Dobrynya; 'this is no hero, but a bold damsel-errant, some maid or wife, forsooth!' Therewith he rode after the warrior-maiden and

smote her upon her turbulent head with his mace of damascened steel. But the warlike virgin sat her good steed firmly, wavering not nor glancing back. Dobrynya sat his good steed in terror and departed from that bold *polyanitza:* 'Plainly,' quoth he, 'Dobrynya's valour is as of yore, but his strength is not the strength of other days.'

"Now there stood, near by in the plain, a damp oak, six fathoms in girth. This Dobrynya smote with his mace, and shivered into atoms; and he marvelled greatly.

" 'Of a truth,' he said, 'Dobrynya's might is as of old, but his courage is not the courage of earlier days.'

"Then he rose again in pursuit of the bold warrior-maid, and smote her honourably upon her tempestuous head. She wavered not, glanced not behind. But Dobrynya was sore amazed and tested his might upon a damp oak of twelve fathoms,—and shivered it in splinters. Thereupon Dobrynya waxed wroth, as he sat his good steed, and rode after the bold virgin-warrior a third time and smote her with his mace.

"Thereat she turned and spoke: 'Methought the Russian gnats were biting, but lo! 'tis the Russian hero tapping!'

"Then she seized Dobrynya by his yellow curls, twisted him from his good horse, and dropped him into her deep leather pouch, and rode her way over the open plain.

". . . Quoth the bold *polyanitza,* young Nastasya Mikulishna: 'If the hero be very aged, I will

cut off his head; if he be young and well pleasing in my sight, I will call him friend and lover; if he please me not, I will set him on one of my palms, and press him with the other and make a pancake of him.'

"Then she drew him forth from the leather pouch and liked him well . . . and she quoth: '. . . I roam the open plain seeking an adversary. If thou wilt take me for thy wife, Dobrynya, I will grant thee thy life.' "

Another of these female-warriors, being the best bow-woman in Kiev, goes over the open plain in search of an adversary, in order to marry the one who can shoot better than she. (Nastasya, wife of the *bogatyr* Dunai.)

Ilya Murometz, Russia's mightiest *bogatyr*, is overthrown by a giant *polyanitza*, who prowls over the plain shouldering a club weighing several thousand poods (a pood equals 36 lbs.), defying the *bogatyri*, and who proves to be Ilya's own daughter.

Numerous are the female figures that move through these epic songs, all triumphant, with an air of superiority which raises them above the masculine element. Their courage is mentioned even in the annals of Russian history. For instance, in a Byzantine chronicle speaking of the war of Svyatoslav (the son of Olga) with the Greeks, it is said that among the dead Slavs there were very many women.

Historians of the earlier epochs agree that there are many positive indications that the Slav heathen woman enjoyed an independent position in life, that her social part was equal to the part of men.

The heathen marriages are the clearest signs of this independence of the woman. Here we find that the will of the parents played not such an important part as the consent of the bride, though on account of the clan relations it was necessary to take the girl by force, as the parents would not give her up for nothing. The woman's personality in those times was strong enough to make the parents respect her will. In the Russian annals we find several such instances. Rognyeda of Polotsk refuses to marry Vladimir, the prince of Kiev, because she is already betrothed to his brother, and her father does not oppose her will, though he knows that in refusing Vladimir his family is doomed. Again, in the eleventh century, Vladimir Vasilkovitch, Prince Galitzky, feeling the approach of death, makes his brother kiss the cross and swear that he will not force Vladimir's daughter into marriage but will permit her to marry whomever she may love.

Freedom of consultation about marriage, and freedom in choosing a bridegroom indicate strongly that in heathen times the woman's position was more free and independent than in following cen-

turies. In the Ukraine, indeed, such customs persisted long after they had died out in other parts of Russia. Maxim Kovalevsky, late professor of jurisprudence at the University of Moscow, cites the French writer Beauplan, who speaking of the manners and customs of the inhabitants of Little Russia as late as the latter part of the seventeenth century says:

"In the Ukraina, contrary to the customs of all other nations the husbands do not choose their wives, but are chosen themselves by their future consorts."

The privileges which a woman in the early days enjoyed before marriage, in family and social life, she lost with marriage. She ceased to dominate her husband, though she remained his equal. Referring again to the epic songs, we find there that the wife is able to stand side by side with her husband, do his work and achieve his exploits; but there is no more mention of her ever overcoming him when they meet as adversaries. Vassilisa, the daughter of Mikula Selyanovitch and the wife of Stavr Godinovitch, goes to the rescue of her husband when he is thrown into a dungeon for discourteous boasting by Prince Vladimir, the Fair Sun. She disguises herself as an ambassador for the hand of Vladimir's daughter and stands all the

tests to which Vladimir submits her. She agrees to shoot a match with his young heroes, but sends for her ordinary arrow which is brought in by "five youths bearing the first end and as many more the last." When Vladimir offers her a wrestling match she takes two heroes in one hand and three in the other and knocks them together.

Here are the exploits of another wife. When Kiev was attacked by the Dragon Tugarin, Vladimir, the Fair Sun, sent a messenger to ask Ilya Murometz to come and defend the town by fighting the Dragon. Ilya was not at home. His wife put on his armour, took his weapons, saddled his horse and taken by everyone for Ilya, went to Kiev and defeated the enemy.

The ancient history of Russia gives us a perfect type of such a free woman in the image of the Princess Olga (became ruler of Kiev in 945 A.D.), widow of Prince Igor, who was killed by the Drevliane, one of the Slavonic tribes. Olga is the people's expression of the highest and most desirable qualities in a woman.

Olga governs like a prince; she commands the army and marches at its head; she avenges her husband's death by subjugating the Drevliane to Kiev; she goes hunting like any good prince; she travels through the country establishing and collecting "dues and taxes, tribute and tolls"; she gives

laws and maintains order; she makes a journey to Greece; she patronizes the spreading of Christianity. The tales of her expeditions and of her laws lived in the grateful memory of the people for many centuries, and she was surnamed Olga the Wise.

Historians disagree as to the time and place of Olga's conversion to Christianity. Some think that she was baptized in Constantinople in 857 A.D.; others, that she was already a Christian when she went to Greece. Her son Sviatoslav, who died in 972, remained a pagan; and it was only her grandson Vladimir, baptized in 897 A.D., who ordered that on a certain day all the population of Kiev, either voluntarily or by force, should be baptized in the river Dniepr. It is said that one of the reasons given Vladimir in favor of the Greek religion was that Olga the Wise had found it good.

Olga's life and activities were typical of those of the princes of that time. Neither was it strange that a woman should achieve all these manly and courageous deeds. On the contrary it was perfectly natural for a woman to assume such a position, especially for a widow who had a son.

The woman of that time—according to Shashkov, one of the few historians who took up the destinies of Russian women—possessed many rights, and a widowed mother was almost equal in rights with the

man. Women could hold and rule estates; wives of princes received ambassadors and conducted negotiations. In the treaty of Igor with the Greeks ambassadors are mentioned not only from the princes but also from their wives; the princesses possessed their own towns and even their own armies which they maintained at their own expense. Sometimes, at least, the women took part in the *vietche* (town councils) and had the right to conduct independently lawsuits and so forth. Many of these rights and privileges women retained for a certain time even during the following epoch of their gradual subjection.

CHAPTER II

THREE factors played an important rôle in the subjection of Russian women. The first was the principle of the clan which subordinated the woman to the family and to her husband.

In heathen times the Slavs lived—so Kluchevsky, late professor of history at the University of Moscow, tells us—in large families or clans scattered through the wild, uncultivated country, in the midst of marshes. There they built their isolated dwellings or homesteads, surrounded by earthen fortifications which served both as a protection against enemies and to guard the cattle from wild beasts. In these wilds the Slavs supported themselves by trapping fur-bearing animals, by forest apiculture and by primitive husbandry. Clan union rested upon two supports, namely, the indivisibility of the clan property and the authority of the head of the clan. As the clans were scattered throughout the country, most of the time the clan was only a large family; and consequently the head of the clan was the head of the family.

We have seen that the woman after marriage had ceased to dominate her husband, though she had

kept her equal position. But once in the clan there was the authority of only one person—its head—hence there could be no question of equality among its members.

The woman, on the strength of her recent freedom, independence, and equality, fought desperately against this subjection. It is interesting to relate in connection with this period the old custom in accordance with which the bride had to take off her husband's boots in sign of future submission. But after taking the boots off, she would tap her husband on the head with them, as if to say: "Don't imagine, please, that I am going to wait on you always without having a mind of my own." Not less interesting it is to note that in one of the bridegroom's boots there was money and in the other a lash. (Shashkov.)

But the last remnants of equality, independence, and freedom for which she had fought the Russian woman lost in the subsequent evolution of society which clearly tended to the establishment of an order in which the full subjection of woman's personality came to seem natural.

This patriarchal system necessarily fostered the subjection of woman, since the idea of woman's inferiority naturally arises when man tries to be the only master and active character.

The second not less important factor in the his-

tory of the subjection of the Russian women was the adoption of the Byzantine form of church organization when Russia was converted to Christianity. This strengthened and promoted the growth of the patriarchal system.

Ancient Rus, being a young nation, submitted readily to sophisticated leaders. Accepting Christianity from Byzantium, the Russian people accepted unreservedly with it Byzantine ideas which spread widely through Russian life.

History repeats itself. Whatever the reason, the phenomena of the ancient classic society of Rome repeat themselves in the history of Byzantium. The Messalinas and Agrippinas are faithfully reproduced by the Pulcherias, the Theodoras, and the Antoninas. The social life of Byzantium, formed amidst the struggle of the parties of the court, church, and theatre, fell under the strong influence of women. They exerted their power over men often to secure their own personal ends. This abuse of power resulted in innumerable calamities which finally created for women the reputation of being malicious and sinful.

The depravity of society in Greece had gone beyond all bounds. In reaction there arose the ascetic idea of renunciation of the world, the seeking of salvation in forsaking its pleasures, and all the blame for the existing order of things was

thrown on the women. There resulted a literature aimed against woman in general, in which the image of the malicious sinning wife gradually took definite forms. The biblical story of Eve tempting Adam and causing the fall of humanity was taken as the basis for this attitude. Woman was considered the prototype of all moral indecency. Simultaneously with these conceptions developed the consideration of woman as an unclean being and the notion of the extreme superiority of the masculine sex over the feminine.

These conceptions found a fertile soil in the almost savage ignorance and superstition of a people who always had believed that woman possessed supernatural power. It is true that before the coming of Byzantine ideas the people considered this power as sacred, deeming that woman possessed prophetic gifts, knowledge of nature's secrets, and omnipotent charms of magic. The art of healing by different herbs and conjurations, the interpretation of dreams and signs, the finding of something lost or stolen, these were the prerogatives of women. There is not the slightest doubt that in primitive Slavonic life the woman had a significance of purity and beneficence. But under the influence of Byzantium what had been considered as virtues came to be looked upon as malicious, hostile, devilish witchcraft.

Such opinions about women were naturally reflected in the point of view of Russian Christians in regard to marriage, especially since the development of the patriarchal system, as has already been mentioned, contained the idea of woman's inferiority to man. The Byzantine form of church organization only strengthened the power of the husband over the wife in the clan-family. Besides, as a direct result of Eastern conceptions, child marriages began to take place, which gave the husband or his parents an opportunity to bring up the wife in a thorough understanding of her slavery and submissiveness.

It has already been pointed out that the history of ancient Russia begins precisely at that period of historical development when the family formed the essential basis of national life. The ideal of parental tutelage formed the foundation upon which all Russian social life was organized, and upon it the Russian Empire itself was established. Under it not only the personality of the woman, but that of the man as well had no intrinsic importance, because this ideal did not recognize the idea of personality. It knew only the idea of family or race.

We have already seen that because of the authority of one person in the clan-family, there could be no equality among its members. Nor could there

be question of independent personality. The individual did not represent himself, he was only the representative of a certain degree of seniority or juniority according to his birth. The principle of self completely disappeared in that of family. Therefore the senior in the family was the father, the tutor, who looked upon those subordinated to and dependent on him as minors, under-aged in the social sense. Parental power in ancient Rus was almost unlimited. Law and custom, popular opinion and church doctrine—all agreed on this. It had such an important influence in old Russian life that it would be necessary in the course of this study to trace it back, because throughout the whole of Russian history we find the principle of the independence and equality of woman in opposition to the principle of the family in which her submission is demanded.

Parallel with the development of the patriarchal system and parental authority grew the ideal of renunciation of the world, of monasticism. This ideal was manifested in Russian life very early and very strongly. In the families of the ruling princes the monastic ideal already prevailed during the time of Vladimir's grandsons—early in the eleventh century—and thenceforth became the highest purpose of life for both men and women.

In the following generations this ideal of celibacy

and renunciation of the world spread more and more into the life of the women. It developed on one side under the influence of the church and of Eastern ascetic thought; on the other, as a counterbalance to the customs, increasingly loose, of contemporary society. This laxity of social customs was to a great degree due to the patriarchal system, because when men acquired unlimited, unrestrained power they did not fail to use it for the gratification of their lower instincts—which at that time were the only ones in evidence.

According to the Ordinance of Yaroslav (1019-1054), taken from the Byzantine Nomocanon, the woman was already put under the protection of the church laws, which dominated all the affairs of domestic life. By virtue of this Nomocanon, she was separated from the world, isolated from society, a member of the household only. All her life, all her activities, were limited by the close sphere of family life. Living thus in an exclusively domestic isolated condition she had for that same reason to submit more completely to the regulations of the monastic ideal. Since she was the "keeper of the house," her activities were applied solely to the organization of the house and even confined to it. The ideal of monasticism was so high and so strong that in embodying the best ideal of life in the affairs and relations of the house, the woman

inevitably little by little transformed the home almost into a nunnery.

Under the influence of these two factors—the patriarchal system and the Byzantine notions—the *terem* made its appearance in the life of the Russian women.

The *terem* was a rear part of the house, or an upper part like an attic, where the women were confined in seclusion. The key of the *terem* was often kept by the master of the house. The fence surrounding that part of the house was always very high, so that the women could walk in the garden without being seen. The *terem* stood for seclusion, isolation.

The date of its appearance is not known and is of no importance. The significance of the *terem* as an institution is that it was the direct result of the idea of tutelage in the patriarchal system which found it necessary to confine the women to the *terem* where safeguarding could more surely secure its aims. It is also the fruit of the ideal of renunciation of the world, the offspring of asceticism and of the Byzantine conceptions about the evil nature of woman.

The third factor in the history of the subjection of Russian women was the Tartar invasion in the thirteenth century and the subsequent two hundred years of Tartar rule.

The name Tartars was given to the numerous

hordes of Mongol and Turkoman tribes that wandered through the Gobi desert and the southern parts of Siberia. In 1223 a great number of them invaded the southern part of the Crimea. Here they met the Russians and routed them completely. They did not, however, pursue them further than the river Dniepr, the invaders settling along the river Don. About 1224 the Tartars prepared for another battle with the Russians, but something happened amongst themselves, and the Tartar army returned to Asia.

In 1236 the Tartar Khan Batiy with an army of 300,000 set forth from Asia to the Volga river and laid waste all the land through which they passed. In 1237 they took the principality of Riazan, and in the course of three years took possession of all the Russian territory and established the Kingdom of the Golden Horde.

An extremely hard time then began for the Russian people. The Tartars did not touch the internal organization of Russia; they wanted only to collect as large taxes as possible, and demanded an auxiliary army for use in case of campaigns. The continual devastation, the humiliations, and the economic oppression, together with the constant intercourse with barbarians, had an important and terribly distressing influence on the historical development of the people, undermining

the best side of Russian life, stopping the development of thought, and stimulating bad instincts—sly cunning, servility, perjury, or else the rude forces necessary for resisting the enemy.

These evil influences were bound to strengthen and intensify that attitude of society towards women which was brought about by the patriarchal system and the Byzantine ideals. Woman gradually retired from society, appearing only on special occasions. However, until the fourteenth century and even the fifteenth century she still had some freedom and enjoyed some privileges. Thus, certain princesses took an active part in the social life of the men; gave audiences to ambassadors; even dined and feasted with men. But on the whole such freedom was of no importance, and as a rule woman had no place in society. As a mother or a wife she had her place at feasts or marriages, where a young girl also had a place; but these were her only free steps.

In the annals of that time there are no accounts whatsoever of events or exploits in which woman's personality found expression as an independent factor in social life. On the contrary, the only great deeds achieved by women about which the chronicles speak are acts of renunciation of the world, the taking of vows, the building of nun-

neries and churches, in a word, of deeds of the most zealous and fervent piety in all its aspects.

Only in one case did woman retain her position as the equal of man. This was the case of the widowed mother with sons. After the death of her husband the widow acquired full authority over the family, even if the children were grown up. Thus we see that widowed mothers as princesses attained through their personality great influence and importance, practically taking the place of their husbands, the princes. This is particularly noticeable in the fourteenth and fifteenth centuries when the appanage system acquired strength. This was a system by which each patrimony was the independent indivisible property of a given prince. His widow, therefore, inherited it and was placed in an independent position.

With the establishment of monarchy, however, this accidental independence became impossible, and woman was completely relegated to the *terem.* As one of the old songs says:

"There she sits behind twenty-seven locks,
Yes, she sits there, locked by twenty-seven keys,
That neither the wind may cool her face,
Nor the sun may burn it,
And also that young men may not see her."

CHAPTER III

A NATION'S marriage institutions, marriage customs, and folksongs always afford rich material for the study of its character. In the case of Russia we can easily trace through them the gradual subjection of woman.

In ancient Rus the institution of marriage existed from immemorable times. We have already spoken of the *polyanizas*, who chose their own husbands, and of the freedom which women had in giving their consent to marriage. In the clans, during the first period of their development, we have seen that the girl had to be carried off as the family did not want to give her up for nothing, but this capture was the result of free choice. In the eleventh century we are told by the chronicle of the monk Nestor, whose annals are considered the most reliable record of the Russian history of that time, that the Slavs met at festivals organized between different clans and there chose their partners for life. The choice was mutual, the girls having the same right to choose their future husbands as had the men to choose brides.

With the development of the patriarchal sys-

tem, women no longer were able to exercise choice, and abduction became the custom. The chronicles of Nestor tell us that in some places girls as well as married women were seized by force at festivals; in others the bridegroom made raids which were often followed by pillaging, by demolition of the dwellings, and by capture of the whole family of the bride.

In the following wedding song the bride laments her fate:

"The garden is to be seized;
The family is to be conquered.
They will come to my father,
With fighting and with pillaging,
They will rob my father,
They will make a captive of my mother,
They will carry me, young girl,
To a far off, unknown country."

In other songs the bride begs her girl friends to hide her from the "wicked horseman," i.e., the bridegroom; and in some localities the custom of hiding the bride is still practised. Her girl friends place the bride in a corner and cover her face with a kerchief. The bridegroom then pulls the kerchief down and kisses the bride by force.

Kovalevsky speaks of another custom still prevailing in peasant weddings. On the day fixed for the wedding the doors leading to the homestead

of the bride are closely shut. Sometimes a temporary wooden wall is erected to protect the family from intrusion. Wedding songs still in use in the province of Tula speak of the necessity of defending the approach to the bride's residence with oak trees, cut down and laid as barriers to block up the road, and with shields disposed before the principal entrance.

On account of the animosity between the clans, their remoteness, and the general unrest of the country, wedding parties going to capture a bride had to be well armed and ready to attack as well as to defend themselves. Not all the raids were successful for the bridegroom and his friends. We have records of marriage ceremonies showing that the bridegroom, after meeting efficient resistance from the father of the bride, finally sought an agreement by amicable methods.

Such amicable agreements became more and more frequent in time, as animosity between the clans decreased. Abduction was gradually transformed into the peaceful marriage arrangements by "buying and selling" which have remained up to the present time. Kluchevsky, in speaking of marriage customs, says that the feuds which might have arisen between the various clans in consequence of their seizure of each other's women were also averted by the *vieno,* a sum paid in compensa-

tion to the kinsfolk of a captured girl. In time the custom of paying the *vieno* changed into a direct sale of the bride to the bridegroom by her kin, with the consent of the clans of both parties; and marriage by force gave place to the more peaceful ceremony of permitted *khozhdénie ziátia po nevéstu,* that is to say, of a bridegroom going to fetch his bride and paying for her. In the chronicles we also find mention of the bride being brought to the bridegroom with her dowry. But whether she were to be abducted or whether she were to be sold, the girl had no right to an opinion of her own, no choice. She was simply a chattel, not a person.

This accounts for the fact that throughout all wedding songs we find that the bride, instead of in any way rejoicing, constantly laments. She laments that she has to leave her dear mother, her family, her friends; that she is to be taken to "a far off, distant country," to live in an "unknown family-clan" upon which she must be dependent. Her lamentations are perfectly natural if we remember that at that time the clans were situated far away one from another and that there was animosity between them. She was received by the relatives of the bridegroom with hostility, as a stranger, and treated as a slave. In folksongs she says of them: "as a bear with a she-bear are the

god-given father and the god-given mother; prickly thorns—the god-given brothers; burning nettles—the god-given sisters."

In proportion to the growth and strengthening of the patriarchal system, the girl became a tool in the hands of the father or the tutor. Furthermore, not only the father or the tutor gave the girl in marriage. This right belonged in certain circumstances to any authority—to the landowner, the community, or the Czar, because every authority bore a patriarchal character. As the song has it, marriages were contracted:

"By the will of God,
By decree of the Czar,
By order of the master,
By decision of the community."
(Shashkov.)

Custom obliged every master of the house in ancient Russia to care for his menials in the same way as for his children, and marry them off. The landowners did this until the emancipation of the serfs in 1861. From the time of the Czar Alexei (seventeenth century) marriages were often performed by order of the government; and even in the nineteenth century we find that such marriages were common in military colonies.

Turning to marriages by decision of the com-

munity, we find that the peasant communities of the twentieth century often interfered with the love affairs of their orphan members, deciding that a certain orphan girl should be married to an orphan youth, whether the two wished it or not.

The sanction of paternal interference is also found in the Russian legislature even of recent years, wherein it is necessary for the bridegroom to secure a permission to marry from his superiors.

In ancient Russia the Czar alone had freedom to choose a bride. Like the emperors of Byzantium or the Asiatic Khans, he chose her from among the girls of the whole country. When the Czar decided to marry, imperial decrees were circulated everywhere in Moscow and throughout the provinces to the nobility, announcing that the authorities were to examine their daughters, as the Czar needed a bride. As soon as these decrees were received, the nobility had to bring their daughters into town, where the authorities would select the most pleasing. Those who were chosen were taken for presentation to the Czar.

It was perfectly natural that rivalry among relatives of the girls should be fierce and that families resorted to ruses of all sorts in order to obtain relationship with the Czar. Gossip and slander were spread about the girls who seemed to be preferred by him, and even about the chosen bride

after she had gone to live in the palace before the marriage. Most important to a Czar's betrothed was her health; and many and ingenious were the expedients to prove her health defective. Sometimes even, the bride would, as a result, be banished from the palace and exiled with her family for an attempt to deceive the Czar. Thus the bride of the first Romanov, Michail Feodorovitch (1613-1645) was given so many sweets that she fell ill, and she was exiled. The Czar married another girl, who died three months later at the hands of her enemies. When Michail's son Alexei (1645-1676) was to be married, the hair of his bride was tied so hard that she fainted. This was rumored to be a fit of epilepsy, and she was exiled to Siberia together with her father, who had first been flogged.

It often happened that after the Czar had chosen his bride he would choose among the other girls brides for his *boyars* and officials. In the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries marriages among common people were simply agreements between two families, and the bride and the bridegroom almost never saw each other until the wedding.

Professor Leo Wiener, in his *Anthology of Russian Literature,* gives a good translation of the faithful detailed descriptions of these marriage customs by Grigori Kotoshikhin (1630-1667), who

was a clerk and later a scribe in the Department of Legislature (a kind of Foreign Office).

"When a *boyar* is about to marry off his son, or himself, or his nephew, he, having found out where there is a marriageable girl, sends his friends to the father of that girl to say that such-and-such has sent them to inquire whether he would be willing to give his daughter or relative to him or his relative, and what the girl's dowry would be in the trousseau, money, patrimony and serfs. If the person addressed is willing to give him his daughter or relative, he replies to the inquiry that he intends to marry off the girl, only he has to consider the matter with his wife and family, and that he will give a definite answer on a certain day; but if he does not wish to give him his daughter, knowing that he is a drunkard, or fast, or has some other bad habit, he will say at once that he is not going to give him the girl, or find some excuse for refusing the request. (This of course will not happen if the man who wants to marry the girl is an influential person; then every bad habit of his will be overlooked!)

"Having taken counsel with the family and having decided to give the girl, the father makes a detailed list of her dowry in money, silver, and other ware, dresses, patrimony and serfs, and sends it to the bridegroom. Nothing is told of the matter to the prospective bride, who remains in ignorance thereof.

"The dowry of the bride appearing satisfactory,

the groom sends his people to the bride's parents, to ask them to present the girl. The bride's parents reply that they are willing to show their daughter, though not to the prospective groom, but to his mother, sister, or near female relative, in whom the groom may have special confidence. On the appointed day the groom sends his mother or sister to inspect the bride; the bride's parents make preparations for that day, attire their daughter in fine garments, invite their relatives to dinner and seat their daughter at the table.

"When the inspectress arrives she is met with honor due her, and is placed at the table near the bride. Sitting at the table the inspectress converses with the girl on all kinds of subjects, in order to try her mind and manner of speech, and closely watches her face, eyes, and special marks in order to bring a correct report to the bridegroom; having stayed a short time she returns to the bridegroom. If the inspectress takes no liking to the bride, having discovered that she is silly, or homely, or has imperfect eyes, or is lame, or a poor talker, and so reports to the groom, he gives her up and that is the last of it. But if the bride has found favor in the inspectress' eyes, and she tells the groom that the girl is good and clever and perfect in speech and all things, the groom sends his former friends again to the girl's parents, telling them that he likes their daughter and that he wishes to come to a parley to write the marriage contract in order to marry her on a certain day. The bride's parents reply that the groom should come to the

parley with a few friends on a certain day in the forenoon or afternoon.

"On the appointed day the groom puts on his best clothes and drives with his father, or near relative, or friends, to the bride's parents. Upon arrival the bride's parents and her near relatives meet them with due honor, after which they go into the house and seat themselves according to rank. Having sat a while, the groom's father or near relative remarks that they have come for the good work, as he has bid them; the host answers that he is glad to see them and that he is ready to take up the matter. Then both sides begin to discuss all kinds of marriage articles, and to set the day for the wedding according to how soon they can get ready for it—in a week, a month, half a year, a year or even more. Then they enter their names and the bride's name and the names of witnesses in the marriage contract and it is agreed that he is to take the girl on a certain day without fail and that the girl is to be turned over to him on that date without fail; and it is provided in that contract that if the groom does not take the girl on the appointed day, or the father will not give him his daughter on that day, the offending party is to pay 1,000, 5,000, or 10,000 roubles, as the agreement may be. Having stayed awhile and having eaten and drunk, they return home without having seen the bride and without the bride having seen the groom; but the mother or married sister, or wife of some relative, comes out to present the groom with some embroidery from the bride.

"If both parties carry out their agreement then the groom invites his guests; on the part of the bride the guests are invited in the same way. On the day of the wedding tables are set at the house of the groom and of the bride, and the word being given to the groom that it is time to fetch the bride, they all set out according to the ceremonial rank: first the bread-men carry bread on a tray; then, if it is summer, the priest with the cross rides on horseback, but in winter in a sleigh; then follow the *boyars*, the thousandman (who is a great personage in that procession), and the groom.

"Having reached the court of the bride's house, they enter the hall in ceremonial order and the bride's father and his guests meet them with due honor. When the time arrives to drive to church to perform the marriage, the bride's maids ask her parents to give the groom and the bride their blessing for the marriage. They bless them with words, but before leaving, bless them with a holy image, and, taking their daughter's hand, give her to the groom.

"Then the ceremonial guests, the priest, and the groom with his bride, whose hand he is holding, go out of the hall, and the bride's parents and their guests accompany them to the court; the groom places the bride in a *kolymiaga* (closed carriage), mounts a horse or seats himself in a sleigh; the ceremonial guests do the same and all drive to the church where they are to be married. The bride's parents and their guests return to the house

where they eat and drink until news is brought from the groom; the bride is accompanied only by her own and the bridegroom's go-between. The two having been united, the whole troop drives to the groom's house, and news is sent to the bride's father that they have been propitiously married. When they arrive at the groom's court, the groom's parents, or those who are in their stead, bless them with images and present them with bread and salt, and then all seat themselves at the table and begin to eat according to the ceremony; and then the bride is unveiled."

We see from this description that the bride played an entirely passive rôle, not seeing the groom until it was time to go to church. The groom's part was not much more active, though he had the advantage of sending an inspectress to observe the girl and bring him a report. This inspection of her, however, was nothing but an inspection of goods put on the market for sale, and consequently there were many cases of cheating. A sick girl would be rouged; a thin one made to look fat by padding with cushions, and so forth.

"Nowhere in the whole world," says Kotoshikhin, "is such deception practised with marriageable girls as in the kingdom of Muscovy" and he proceeds with a description:

"It sometimes happens that the father or mother has two or three daughters where the eldest daugh-

ter is maimed, being blind, or lame, or deaf, or mute, while the other sisters are perfect in shape and beauty and speech. When a man sues for their daughter and sends his mother or relative to inspect her, the parents sometimes substitute the second or third daughter, giving her the name of the maimed sister. So that the inspectress not knowing the deceit, takes a liking to the girl and reports to the groom that she is a proper person to marry.

"Then the groom, depending upon the inspectress' word, holds a parley with the girl's parents and agrees to marry her upon an appointed day, and the fine for default is set so high that the defaulting party would not be able to pay it. When the wedding takes place, the parents turn over to him the maimed daughter, whose name is given in the articles of marriage, but who is not the one the inspectress has seen. But the groom cannot discover on the wedding day that she is blind, or disfigured, or otherwise defective, for at the wedding she is veiled and does not say a word, nor can he know whether she is lame, because her bride's maids lead her, supporting her under the arms."

The deceived groom could complain to the Patriarch and the authorities; and if the deceit was proved, the parents were made to pay a large fine and damages to the groom, and the father was flogged. But it was very difficult to prove that the groom had been cheated, and most of the time his only consolation would consist in maltreating his

wife to such a degree that she either died or begged to be permitted to take the vow. Then he was free to marry again.

Among the peasantry even at the present time marriage has preserved the form of "buying and selling." In other classes, among the townspeople, the clergy, and the merchants the marriage contract is a business contract between two families, and the bride has to have a dowry, which is described in detail in the inventory of the trousseau. As the bride's parents often tried to cheat the groom regarding the dowry, he frequently asked that it be given to him before the marriage. Herefrom originated the proverb: "Put the money on the table, and then seat the girl at the table." The merchant class has always considered it perfectly natural to try to cheat the bridegroom.

Weddings in the earlier times were accompanied by a great number of rites, all of which had one fundamental thought—that the bride passed entirely into the possession of her husband and thenceforth depended only upon him as her lord and master. The dowry was spoken of as the property of the husband, and the wife herself as the principal item of that property. There was a custom by which the father took the lash and struck his daughter, saying: "My daughter, by these blows you recognize the authority of your father. Now this

authority passes into other hands: In my stead you will be punished for disobedience by your husband." And with these words he gave the lash to the groom, who stuck it in his belt expressing the hope that he would not have occasion to use it. In some places it was customary for the husband, when the bride had taken his boots off to tap her with the lash. This lash was hung over the bed.

This custom, like so many others which we have already considered, was the direct outcome of the patriarchal system with its fundamental idea of parental tutelage. Parental authority expressed itself fully and typically in the Domostroi, a code of church rules regulating the life of the people. The composition of the Domostroi has been attributed to the pope Sylvestr, a contemporary of Ivan the Terrible (1547-1584). But according to recent investigations only two chapters can be ascribed to this priest; the others were put together at various periods. The ideas and principles expressed in the Domostroi represent the thought of several centuries. The directions it contains cover the whole of Russian life—spiritual, domestic, and social.

The Domostroi defines most exactly the respective duties of husband and wife. The wife is to be kind, silent, hard-working, obedient, and she is to submit to physical punishment—administered by

her husband gently and without anger, while he holds her decently by the hand—and always in private so that nobody shall see or know it (Wasilevsky). And if the wife, the daughter, or the son pays no attention to the word or to the punishment —does not listen, does not obey, is not afraid— then the husband or the father can teach or beat them with a lash, according to the fault. The punishment is to be administered judiciously, as it is "reasonable and yet painful, terrible and yet beneficial." And if the fault is great and the disobedience and the neglect excessive, the husband must take off the wife's chemise and "holding her by the hands, politely beat her according to the fault." (This must refer to the length and severity of the execution.)

The Domostroi imposed a childish submission upon wives. They had even to ask their husbands what they should say to their friends. In the *Anthology of Russian Literature* Leo Wiener gives a translation of the Domostroi rules for a wife's duty. They are entitled:

"The Wife Is Always and in All Things to Take Counsel with Her Husband."

"In all affairs of every-day life, the wife is to take counsel with her husband, and to ask him, if she needs anything. Let her be sure that her husband wants her to keep company with the guests

she invites, or the people she calls upon. Let her put on the best garment, if she receives a guest, or herself is invited somewhere to dinner. By all means let her abstain from drinking liquor, for a drunk man is bad enough, but a drunk woman has no place in the world. A woman ought to talk with her lady-friends of handiwork and housekeeping. She must pay attention to any good word that is said in her own house, or that of her friend: how good women live, how they keep house, manage their household, instruct their children and servants, obey their husbands, and ask their advice in everything, and submit to them. And if there be aught she does not know, let her politely inquire about it. . . . It is good to meet such good women, not for the sake of eating and drinking with them, but for the sake of good converse and information, for it is profitable to listen to them. Let not a woman rail at anyone, or gossip about others. If she should be asked something about a person, let her answer: 'I know nothing about it and have heard nothing of it; I do not inquire about things that do not concern me; nor do I sit in judgment over the wives of the princes, boyars, or my neighbors!' "

Any manifestation of personal or social independence immediately provoked moral condemnation as a vice of pride, of conceit or of presumption.

The death of the husband did not free the woman from her subject state. The marriage of a widow was considered unfavorably from the point of view

of morality. The widow of a priest, if married again, was supposed to suffer in hell like any sinner. There is a legend which tells us that a dead husband is answerable for the sin of his wife's second marriage, because he did not take in time measures to prevent it. In ancient times a widow was usually burnt with the corpse of her husband, in order that she might enter heaven with him and serve him there. The influence of Byzantium did not uproot this custom, but only changed it. The widow was sworn as a nun in order to pray for her husband's soul and hope for reunion with him after death. Husbands used all means in their power to make their wives promise to enter a convent, but after their death the wives often did not keep the promise.

Only one specially respected position gave the woman some right to her own life. This was, as we have already seen, the case of the widow-mother. A widow with sons was always considered superior to her sons. She was her sons' tutoress, until her death, though perhaps only in name. There were cases when the mother, having become an utter slave, was tyrannized over by her grown-up children in spite of the authority the law gave her. In other cases the widowed mother, having acquired authority in the family, often became herself a tyrant, the tutor of the family in the

same sense of the word as her husband had been.

The Domostroi recognized only the head of the house and ascribed to him supreme power over the house and over the family. But the Domostroi also taught the great responsibility of the lord of the house to the Lord of the Universe. Both this sacred obligation—says Shashkov—and this great responsibility gave the lord of the house the fullest and most indisputable rights to act according to his own judgment and set up his will alone as the principle of all domestic, moral, and household order.

The Domostroi sanctioned in the senior absolute power, unrestrained freedom of will; and in the junior, absolute submission and obedience, unlimited servility, complete childishness and bondage of the will.

Autocracy, in the absolute form into which it moulded itself in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries, was the fruit of that race culture, those patriarchal family principles which found in the Russian land a favorable soil for full development. The roots which this system sank into the national life went so deep that their energy is still indisputably felt. They govern, even today, the family and social life of most of the townspeople and of the clergy. The conceptions of woman's personality which governed education and custom through centuries—the idea of her endless childhood in-

culcated by Eastern culture, and the idea of the lower nature of woman in general—robbed her of all possibility of having an independent position, and even of properly valuing and respecting her own personality. They made of her simply a passive tool for the purpose of race.

CHAPTER IV

AT the beginning of the sixteenth century the seclusion of women had become a definitely established custom, and their life was truly miserable.

Kotoshikhin gives the following picture of that time:

"The feminine sex of the kingdom of Muscovy are not taught to read or write; as to native wit—they are simple-minded and foolish; in replies—stupid and shy because from childhood they live in seclusion in their father's houses and see no one aside from their nearest relatives; they do not see strangers, neither do strangers see them; how can one expect that under such circumstances they should be intelligent and bold."

Baron Herberstein (1486-1566) German ambassador to Russia, who left interesting memoirs about Russian life, says:

"The conditions of life of Russian women are most deplorable. A woman is considered honorable only when she lives at home and never goes out. If in any case she should allow herself to be seen by strangers, her conduct is regarded as

shameful. Very seldom is she permitted to go to church, and still more seldom to see friends, except when she is elderly and will not attract suspicion."

Another ambassador to Russia, Buchau (born in Hungaria in 1546) says:

"The rich and notable *boyars* do not show their wives and daughters, either to strangers, or even to their own brothers and other relatives."

Only the most friendly relations of the master of the house with his guests opened the doors of the *terem* and brought out his wife, or his married daughter, or his son's wife. There existed a custom, according to which the woman was honored by a special greeting, since her appearance indicated the highest degree of hospitality a host could offer to his guests.

Kotoshikhin thus describes this custom:

"When the guests were assembled for a dinner or a feast of honor, the host ordered his wife to come and to greet the guests. When she came into the dining room she placed herself in the front corner,—the place of honor under the images of the saints,—and the guests placed themselves at the door; the hostess greeted the guests with a 'small' salute, i.e., bending as far as the girdle, but the guests greeted her with a 'deep' salute, i.e., bowing

to the ground. Then the host bowed to the ground to the guests, bidding them kiss his wife. The guests in reply requested that he should first kiss her himself. He yielded; after him the guests in succession bowed to the ground to the hostess, stepped forward and kissed her; and, going back to their places, made another deep salute. The wife responded to each guest by a small salute. Then she brought each guest a glass of double or treble-spiced brandy, the size of the glass being about the fourth of a quart. The host bowed to the ground to each guest separately, inviting him to drink the brandy, but the guests requested that the host and hostess should drink first. In reply the host ordered his wife to drink first and drank himself; then together with his wife served the brandy round to the guests, who each bowed to the ground to the hostess, drank the brandy, and having given back the glasses again bowed to the ground. After this the wife bowed to the guests and retired to her apartments to her own guests, the wives of her husband's guests. The hostess and the guests' wives never dined with the men, except at weddings.

"When the round cakes were served at the men's table, the host's married daughters, or daughters-in-law, or wives of his near relatives, came to greet the guests and in this case the ceremonial of serving wine was performed in the same way as the first time, only that it was not the host, but the husbands of the women who bade the guests kiss their wives and drink the wine. The unmarried daugh-

ters never appeared at dinners and were never shown to men.

"Only on special occasions did the women go out, and then only in closed carriages. In winter the women used *kaptanas*, that is, sleighs shaped like small huts covered with velvet or red cloth, with doors at both sides, mica windows and taffeta curtains; for the summer rides they used *kolymigas*, also covered with cloth; these were entered by steps and made like simple carts. In the lives of the Czaritza and the Czarevnas—the daughters of the Czar—this etiquette was even more strictly observed: when they wanted to go to convents to pray, they went during the night, and if it happened that they had to go out in the day-time, cloth screens were carried on both sides of them so that they could not be seen."

In the *bylina* of Duke Stepanovitch, the *boyar's* son, we find rules governing a woman's going out:

"As my lady mother,
The honorable widow, Mameltha Timofeievna,
Comes from the church, from the service,
Before her comes a host of men with shovels
And then a host of sweepers to make all clean,
And others still, spreading cloth.
My mother, the honorable widow, Mameltha Timofeievna
Is escorted on either hand by thirty maidens,
And velvet is hung all round her,
So that the fair sun can not scorch her,
Nor the morning dew touch her."

A foreign writer, Meierberg, who lived in Moscow in 1660, says that during the reign of Alexei (1645-1676) there could scarcely be found one courtier in a thousand who had seen the Czaritza or one of the Czarevnas. Even the court physician was not permitted to see them. Once when the Czaritza was ill and the court physician had to be called, all the curtains in the sick room were carefully drawn. When the physician had to feel the sick woman's pulse, her hand was enveloped in some soft material, so that he should not touch her bare hand. Even if the Czaritza occasionally met some of the *boyars,* it aroused suspicion, and immediately inquests and inquiries were instigated to find out whether the meeting had been premeditated.

In short, the higher the position of the woman's husband, the closer was her seclusion. This seclusion deprived the women of all possibility of developing their intellectual faculties, even to the same low level as that of the men, who developed themselves through the contacts of their active life.

Besides, under the patriarchal system it was not intended that woman should have any intellectuality. She was granted no personal aims in life except marriage, which, however, did not exist for her pleasure or interests, but for the sole purpose of perpetuating the race. The greatest merit of a

woman—says Shashkov—was her ability to give birth to children and especially to boys. Sterility was considered one of the most terrible punishments from God. Sterile wives spent all their time in prayer; with weeping they begged for a child to be born. They were hated by their husbands, despised, tormented, beaten, divorced, or shut up in a convent.

Divorce and a forced taking of the veil were especially frequent in the Czar's family. The Czaritza had to give an heir to the Czar and to the country—this was the principal, the fundamental meaning of her existence and her position. Therefore her sterility was considered a national calamity, and gave the humble subjects of the Czar the right to demand his divorce. The law did not permit a sterile wife to be shut in a convent without her consent; nevertheless, this was practised in the great majority of cases in spite of the law. Revolting scenes sometimes accompanied these forced takings of the veil, but the woman's protests were of no avail. Many were these poor sterile wives who died confined in the convents against their will.

Beside giving birth to the children, the woman, under the patriarchal system, had to be chief housekeeper. The Domostroi enjoined her to be the first person up in the morning, to wake the servants,

work all day long, and to go to bed last. She had to know herself how to do everything which she ordered done—how to cook, to wash, to sew, and to embroider. Even the Czaritzas had to know about every household detail. The woman had to distribute the work among the servants, herself weigh the provisions and cut the material for sewing. She had to serve as an example to the servants; therefore she could not remain idle for one moment. Even with her guests she had to think constantly about the welfare of her household. She had also to look after the conduct of the servants, though she had no right to punish them.

The patriarchal system, in demanding such uninterrupted work from the woman, did not in the least tend to make her independent; the sole purpose of this work was to subordinate her in every respect. But here the patriarchal system failed—the Russian women of the boyar class in the sixteenth and the seventeenth centuries were not active workers; they were parasitic, fat females and nothing more. Seclusion had maimed not only their intellects, but also their bodies. They attired themselves in bright colored dresses, blue with yellow, green with red, and so on. Their love of bright colors went even so far that they painted their faces, hands, and necks with different colors—

white, blue, red and brown or black; some would paint their dark eyebrows white; some—their teeth black. It was considered a disgrace not to be painted, and no woman dared break this rule—were she young or old, rich or poor.

The principal beauty of a woman consisted in her *fleshiness*. There is a proverb saying: "May God make me fleshy; rosiness I can get for myself!" Their whole existence tended to make them fat. They had any number of servants so that they could be idle all the time, slept long, ate much and richly, and hardly moved about at all. Naturally, they grew fatter and fatter, acquiring the corpulence which attracts uncivilized people and which even up to recent times had been considered a necessary asset of beauty in the women of the Russian merchant class. They stopped at nothing which might make them fat. They would stay in bed and try to sleep all day long; they drank vodka—Russian brandy—and resorted to a number of other expedients.

The Russian women of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries spent their time in sleeping, eating, drinking, prayer, church service—which was always performed in the home church—and in pilgrimages to various convents. But the principal part of it they spent in listening to the tales of

pilgrim beggar-women, to the jokes of the jesters, to the would-be prophecies of supposedly inspired half-wits, to gossip, fairy tales, songs, fortune-telling, conjurations and to recitals of all kinds of proverbs and superstitions.

For the most intelligent there was the reading of the lives of the saints, and this was all the intellectual equipment Russian women of that time could have. Neither were there any intelligent amusements, except music, and that in its most primitive and crude forms. Music was one of the Czar's principal pleasures, especially in the women's apartments. Next in importance were the marionette theatre, bears with their trainers, rope-dancers and the like. The inhabitants of the *terem* were spectators also—under condition that they should not be seen—at hunts, bear-baitings, boxing-matches, clown shows—in a word, at all those entertainments by which the Russians, according to the opinion of foreigners (de Bruin), diverted themselves in brutal ways. Drinking also found favor in every circle in the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. It made its way to the *terem* where the women drank like men, and sometimes proved to be able to drink more without being incapacitated. Neither had the Czaritzas and the Czarevnas any objection to drink. The story is told that when in the seventeenth century a foreign prince wanted to

marry a Russian Czarevna he was told, in her praise, that she had been drunk only once.

A wife, under the patriarchal system, brought up in slavery and completely stupefied by the family atmosphere, had no personality of her own. She was the property of her husband not only because of the system, but also because she had come to a state in which she could not wish for anything else. In other words, the patriarchal system had attained its purpose in establishing the absolute autocracy of the husband; it had made the woman torpid and servile, without any sense of her dignity.

Yet, even the "twenty-seven locks" behind which the woman was kept were not able to secure a moral life in ancient Russian society. How, indeed, could the *terem* secure morality to society? If the woman was subdued, the man on the contrary was put on a pedestal. He had an unrestrained will and unlimited power; and he made use of both. The Russia of the seventeenth century was considered more depraved than Turkey. One shivers with horror in reading, for instance, what the women had to endure from Ivan the Terrible and his life-guardsmen.

Husbands possessed their wives as they possessed property, and so it followed also that they sold them, pawned them, lost them at play. In the seven-

teenth century the Patriarch Filaret accused government officials of pawning their wives whenever they were sent to a distant locality for service. The wives were to recognize the creditors as their husbands until their real husbands should return. In case the debtor did not redeem his wife in time, the creditor had the right to sell her to someone else. In the archives of the eighteenth century are found documents indicating that such occurrences were frequent even then. A husband tired of his wife could drive her out into the street, or force her to enter a convent. No law protected the women.

Kotoshikhin remarks that poison was one of the favorite means of getting rid of a wife no longer desired. A wife, however, could also use poison to get rid of her husband if his tyranny reached such a point that even a dull and servile woman could bear it no longer. Deprived of self-reliance, the women could have recourse only to subtlety and hypocrisy. They could use against their masters the very weapon by which they were oppressed —fear. They used it, employing all kinds of conjurations, witchcraft, fortune-telling, and so on, which the men, who were extremely superstitious and ignorant, believed. Another weapon in the hands of the women was crude coquetry, because the only way they could acquire any power, save

by fear, was in appealing to the men's lower instincts. Under such circumstances as all these, there could be no real love between husband and wife. At best, there could be only humility and devotion on the part of the wife, and condescending patronage on that of the husband. Foreign travellers have often noted that in Muscovy the men were not gallant towards women. How could they be so, when even almost up to the present time one could often hear a man repeat the proverb: "A hen is not a bird; and a woman is not a human being"?

But even in this period of utter depravity the influence of the Eastern ascetic thought did not entirely disappear. The ideal of good Russian woman was still the image of nun-like piety; of nun-like purity and severity of manners; of nun-like sanctification of all thoughts and actions. The lives of these good women shine like rays of light through the darkness of those oppressive times, showing that beauty of character had not altogether disappeared in Russia's women.

The *boyarina* Theodosia Morosova, closest friend of the first wife of Czar Alexei, presents a striking example of such women. Morosova enjoyed much consideration at court, as her husband had great influence over the Czar whose tutor he had been. When he died, leaving her a young widow, she did not enter a convent; but her house was organized

like a nunnery. She was extremely rich, but took no pride in it, and consecrated all her time to good works. Morosova strictly conformed herself to the rules of the Domostroi and accepted responsibility for the souls of her menials, of whom she had not less than 500 at one time in her house. She ran the house herself, entered into every household detail. She spent hours in discussing the needs of her peasants. She administered justice. She weaved, spun, and sewed ordinary dresses and underwear; and in the night, secretly, she distributed these things in the prisons and to the poor. She rescued the poor from punishment. Beggars and pilgrims filled her house and she talked with them by the hour, helped them in every way, and sat down at table with them. She fed the hungry, nursed the sick and maimed, washed their wounds and sores.

At the time of the great schism in the Russian church, Morosova and her sister princess Urusova became fervent followers of the Archpriest Abbakoum. Morosova was very pious and well read in ecclesiastic literature. She was eager to find the truth about life. The preachers of the schism converted her to their belief and she gave herself wholly, glad to suffer for her convictions. In her house followers and preachers of the schism were continually concealed. There also lived five nuns

with their superior, Mother Melania. Morosova placed herself entirely under the directions of Melania and was secretly shorn as a nun. Morosova's friends tried in vain to persuade her to yield to the will of the Czar, but neither threats nor admonitions, persecutions nor confiscation of property could make her renounce what she believed to be the truth. She and her sister were imprisoned in various places, but this did not change their attitude. They were tortured, tried by fire, flogged mercilessly, suspended to poles, starved, shut in an earthen prison which almost choked them with its stench; yet all this was of no avail. Urusova died first, soon followed by Morosova, neither of them having receded from their convictions. On the contrary, they accepted persecution with joy.

History tells of other women who similarly suffered for their faith. But there were many more who left no record whatsoever, though they stood their ground as firmly. The great schism offered to Russian women a means of hardening and fortifying character.

The great schism in the Russian church took place because of the separation of a large part of the Russian Orthodox community from the Russian Orthodox Church. The cleavage began in the reign of Alexei in consequence of certain changes introduced by the Patriarch Nikon. Nikon had caused

to be corrected certain church books which he considered full of the blunders and mistakes of ignorant copyists. He also decided to correct certain erroneous forms of opinion, rites, and customs that had arisen at different times in local church centers and which differed from those originally adopted by the Greek Church which had brought Christianity to Russia. The Church Council sanctioned these erroneous forms and had them spread throughout Russia. Nikon procured a number of the best Greek manuscripts from Mount Athos and other places and had them translated. He distributed the new editions to the churches with instructions that every incorrect version should be destroyed. Immediately protests arose from almost every part of Russia. The Church Council of 1666 pronounced its anathema against those who opposed the Orthodox ecclesiastical authority and expelled them from the Orthodox Church.

Thus was formed the large sect of "Old Believers." This sect had at that time many gifted leaders. Kluchevsky says that Nikon contributed to the schism chiefly by his misunderstanding of the men with whom he had to deal. He undervalued his antagonists, Abbakoum, Neronov, and others. The Archpriest Abbakoum was one of the first and most ardent protagonists of the schism, a popular preacher who carried away his audi-

ences by his eloquence and incited them to martyrdom. He had many followers.

In the reign of Alexei two forces dominated everything else and struggled for supremacy—one for adherence to the old order with its Eastern influence, and the other for the acceptance of Western ideas. In spite of her dealings with Europe in the fifteenth and sixteenth centuries, it was only in the seventeenth century that Russia began to feel the influence of the West. The growing dissatisfaction with the order of things existing at that time in Russia may be accounted as one of the reasons for this.

The Period of Troubles (1598-1613) prepared a general unrest which manifested itself in a series of agitations during the reign of Alexei and of his father Mikhail—the first Romanov (1613-1645) —the masses showing their discontent by rebellions and the upper classes by increased criticisms of the general order. Charges of moral insolvency could not alone accomplish the necessary changes, as they could not remove the conditions which caused that insolvency. These conditions were stagnation, ignorance, narrowness of outlook, paucity of interests. The absence of spiritual stimulus necessarily caused a predominance of material tendencies.

Czar Alexei saw the looseness of manners and

determined to remedy it. He was a true product of the patriarchal system, as he was convinced that his duty to his subjects was the duty of a father, a tutor; therefore he understood the reforms from that angle. Being exceedingly pious he decided that his first duty was to save the souls of his children—his subjects—and so he interdicted a number of amusements and superstitions. In other words, Alexei and his government prescribed a monastic life to a society in which the inclination toward sensual pleasures reigned supreme. Naturally, these measures did not bring the expected results; but their failure strengthened the sense of necessity of reforms and prepared the way for the Western influence.

The West came to Russia first in the form of military and technical improvements, attracting thereby foreigners of all kinds—officers, soldiers, technical experts, physicians, artisans, merchants, and manufacturers. These foreigners brought with them, not only their military and industrial skill, but also the customs and manners of Western Europe, as well as its comforts. These the Russian began speedily to imitate; but in borrowing of the foreigner his "diverting crafts," such as comedies, music, dances, and books, the Muscovite upper classes, by virtue of their interest in these things,

developed also more refined tastes and began dimly to see the need of better knowledge.

The contact with the foreigners had also a beneficent effect upon the conditions of women's life, though so far only in a few cases. The first form in which it expressed itself was the understanding that some kind of an education was necessary for women. Almost the first to realize this was Boris Godunov (1598-1605), who gave a very good education to his daughter Xenia. She, it is said, could not only read, but also write, and was an expert in copying church books. From the seventeenth century it became a custom to teach the Czarevnas how to read and write, as well as the prayers and the Bible.

Another sign of the Western influence could be seen in the attempts of the women to get out of their confinement; an attempt which at first was extremely timid, but which nevertheless showed that the fire of freedom was still smoldering in their hearts. Natalia Kirilovna Narishkina, the second wife of Czar Alexei, was the first to set an example of emancipation. She was brought up in the house of her godfather, *boyarin* Matveiev, where she enjoyed—for that time—considerable freedom. Her first step was to drive out in an open carriage with her husband or even alone. It is

interesting to relate that the first time when Natalia Kirilovna tried to lower the window of the carriage just a bit, everybody was so shocked that she had to give it up for the time being. The young Czaritza also appeared at her husband's side on ceremonial occasions; she received the *boyars* on her name-day, and even was present at theatricals.

Thus from every side, in spite of the opposition of the adherents to the old order, progress was forthcoming; it was in the air. The time of reforms had come; the old order was shaken. There was only need of a great man to carry these reforms into effect. This man appeared in Peter the Great.

CHAPTER V

THE Czar Alexei Mikhailovitch died in 1676, leaving a large family. He was married twice and by his first wife, Maria Miloslavskaya, had two sons, Feodor and Ivan, and six daughters; by his second wife, Natalia Kirilovna Narishkina, one son Peter and one daughter.

Feodor, who succeeded to the throne at the age of fourteen, was a quiet, rather sickly boy. The court upon his accession divided itself into two parties, one surrounding the Czar, his sisters, the Miloslavsky, and their kinsmen, and the other including Feodor's step-mother, the Czaritza Dowager, her children, the Narishkiny and their relatives and partisans.

Feodor died in 1682 leaving no children and the two parties were brought face to face in their fight for the throne. The Miloslavsky—says Rambaud—had on their side the claim of seniority, and, above all, the fact that Ivan was the elder of the two surviving sons; but, unluckily for them, Ivan was an imbecile, both in body and in mind.

The Narishkiny on their side had the precocious intelligence and brightness of Peter, besides the

fact that Natalia Narishkina was legally head of all the royal family, as she was a widow, mother of a son. The Miloslavsky were first defeated on legal grounds, when in 1682 the council of the boyars (*Boyarskaya Duma*) with the Patriarch Iakim at its head proclaimed Czar the young Peter, then ten years old. So the Narishkiny triumphed and Natalia became Czaritza Regent and surrounded herself by her family and partisans.

The rejected Miloslavsky saw their only chance to regain power in a *coup d'état*, but Ivan the elder Czarevitch was incapable of leadership. It was Sophia, one of his sisters, who suddenly took the lead and placed herself at the head of the party.

Sophia was moved not only by the desire to see her party triumph. She had seen a vision of what her future and that of her five sisters would be like with the Narishkiny in power. Kotoshikhin, in describing the life of the daughters or sisters of the Czar, says that they lived in separate apartments like hermits, saw almost no one, but spent all their time in prayer and fasting, unable to marry princes or boyars of their country, as these men were their vassals. A mistress would be deeply disgraced if she married her subject. They were not given into marriage to princes of other kingdoms, as they were not of the same faith and did not know the

language or politics of other countries, so that only humiliation could come to them through such marriages.

"Thus these six princesses," continues Rambaud, "saw themselves condemned to the dread destiny which awaited the younger children of the Czar; they saw that they would be obliged to renounce all hopes of marriage, to have nothing in anticipation but old age after a life spent in the seclusion of the *terem*, and, to crown all, to be subjected to the authority of a step-mother. All that they in the fulness of youth had in prospect was the cloister. They, however, were longing for a life of activity; and though royal etiquette and Byzantine manners, prejudices and traditions forbade them to appear in public, yet even Byzantine traditions offered them models to follow. Had not Pulcheria, daughter of Emperor Arcadius, reigned at Constantinople in the name of her brother, the incapable Theodosius? Sophia, the most energetic of the sisters, saw here an ideal which she could propose to herself—to be a maiden emperor."

Although some signs of reform were already perceptible, a woman needed great energy, courage and patience to emancipate herself from the rigorous laws of the *terem*, to force the "twenty-seven locks," to raise the veil that covered her face,

to appear in public and meet the men on equal footing, or even as a superior; for so far these things had been possible only in thought.

Sophia laid her plans carefully. She first appeared at Feodor's funeral. After this she began to visit monasteries and churches, going out in the daytime in an open carriage. She surrounded herself with educated men. The *terem* suddenly opened its doors, and theatricals were organized in which Sophia's sister Natalia took part. There were played Molière's "Malade Imaginaire," translated into Russian, and other comedies and dramas, some of which were written by Natalia herself.

Together with all this Sophia cleverly wove the threads of intrigue and worked by the spreading of sinister rumors—threatening the life and safety of Ivan and the Czarevnas—towards a revolt among the "streltzi," the guard regiment, corresponding to the pretorian guard of ancient Rome. The revolt took place in May, 1682, and lasted three days, and as a result two Czars were appointed—Ivan and Peter, with Sophia as Regent. So for seven years Sophia ruled Russia in the name of her brothers.

Her triumph had a wider significance than the political one. She was the first to break the rules of the *terem* and thereby she prepared Moscow for

the acceptance of Peter's reforms concerning women. She made a point of showing herself in public whenever she could, at processions, solemn services, and dedications of churches; she presided over meetings, attended the sittings of the Duma, gave audiences to ambassadors, and so on. Often her sisters accompanied her.

Sophia's regency, however, could not last long. On one side, the people and the "streltzi" in particular, were dissatisfied with her rule; on the other, Peter was growing up, and he seized the first opportunity to take the power into his own hands, forcing his sister to retire to a convent.

In the person and character of Peter a type of the Russian *bogatiri* came back to life. He was a giant in the full sense of the word—his invincible perseverance, his astonishing energy, his extraordinary ability for work, his insatiable desire for knowledge, his wonderful vision, his continual activity—all these bespoke his genius; and the work that Peter did was equalled only by his strength of purpose and vitality.

Peter's reforms were the natural and necessary outcome of the growth and development of Russia, and his great importance and merit lay in his genius and his personality, by virtue of which he not only helped the people to make the change,

but understood the necessity of the reforms and carried them out in spite of opposition, because he had a vision of Russia's future.

The emancipation of women was an integral part of the reforms of Peter the Great. He shook the prestige of the patriarchal system by destroying the *terem* and making women free members of society.

He began his attack on the customs which condemned women to social seclusion by issuing a decree which put an end to the practice of marrying girls against their will, and gave young people the right to withdraw from an engagement. Fathers and guardians were obliged to take an oath that they would not force young people to be married against their will; landowners, that they would not force their serfs into marriage. Besides, six weeks before every marriage the betrothal was to take place and from that moment the bride and groom were permitted to see each other freely, and even to break their engagement if they discovered that they did not like one another. For this purpose in 1702 Peter annulled the marriage contract by which a forfeit had to be paid in case one of the parties defaulted, so that they were free to break the engagement without penalty.

In spite of their subjection the girls did not miss this opportunity to exercise freedom of choice; in-

deed, Peter's decree was enforced by the energy of their protests against the old system.

Not less important were the measures by which Peter drew women from their domestic isolation and retirement into the general life of society. Besides insisting on women being present at social gatherings, he established assemblies for their special benefit. These assemblies could be held in any house; and any person of good repute could come without invitation on the sole condition that dress should be European instead of the Russian national costume. At these assemblies light refreshments were served for men and women, and Polish or German dances were danced. Peter's purpose in arranging such assemblies was to teach his uncouth subjects the manners of Europe. For this reason not only foreigners in the service of the government were enjoined to be present, but even war prisoners were to be seen there. Society, however, was too crude to acquire European manners at once. The light refreshments degenerated into heavy drinking by both men and women. Men were often seen lying under the tables or on the floor, or being carried by their drunken servants. Peter even encouraged this drunkenness: he had established a custom by which a person guilty of bad behavior was forced as punishment to empty the "great eagle"—a huge goblet filled with vodka.

Another distinctive trait of these assemblies was immorality in both manners and speech.

In spite of their shortcomings, however, these assemblies accomplished one thing. They brought Russia into contact with Europe. But here the question of language created great difficulties. Describing the assemblies, Bergholtz (a German who came to Russia first in the reign of Peter and then returned with the Duke of Holstein in 1728, and who left valuable memoirs) says that it was very difficult to converse with the ladies at court festivals. Those who spoke German were so few that they were always surrounded by enormous crowds, and it was impossible to get a word with them. The rest knew only enough to answer that they did not understand anything, or not even so much. In Moscow at the assemblies of the merchant class, Bergholtz tells us, the women sat separately from the men, and, when they were not dancing, sat as if dumb—simply staring at each other.

The abolition of the seclusion of women, through which many customs of the patriarchal system were annulled, the favor that marriages with foreigners found in Peter's eyes, and Peter's love for well-educated people, should have resulted in better general education and in better education for women in particular. Actually, however, such results were not soon visible; and we must remember

that society at that time was in a crude stage of its evolution, in order to understand that no immediate change could be expected.

Peter saw the need of education for women, and even in a few individual cases he insisted upon it. But obliged to fight old traditions at every step, he did not undertake to fight also this age-old routine, and left women their choice of receiving an education or not. Thus Peter did not directly promote education for women, nor were any schools instituted for them during his reign.

The entrance of women into society could not of itself improve their condition, since it provided no stimulus to education. The single incentive for study that society offered to women was the learning of foreign languages, in order to be able to converse with foreigners at court. From Peter's time on, foreign ambassadors were presented to the Czaritza and the Czarevnas, who were obliged to greet them.

Since there was no demand for other education, women went no further than the study of languages. This study did not even inculcate in them the love of reading. The only woman known at that time for her love of reading was Peter's sister, the Czarevna Natalia. This is perfectly comprehensible if we remember that in Peter's time people who loved books were so few that even the limited

number of books then printed found no demand. The intellectual level of society was extremely low, as evidenced by its amusements.

"To amuse the new society and give life to his capital," says Rambaud, "Peter instituted masquerades, cavalcades of disguised lords and ladies, the Feast of Fools, the Great Conclave, presided over by the 'Prince-Pope,' Peter's former tutor, the aged Zotov. He was dressed in crimson velvet trimmed with ermine. At his feet sat a Bacchus riding on a cask, with a rummer in one hand and a drinking vessel in the other. He was surrounded by intoxicated Cardinals, among whom were to be found noblemen, princes, acting-governors and sometimes the Czar himself. The procession would pass along the streets followed by a sledge harnessed to four huge hogs driven by a gentleman of rank. Then a court jester, dressed as Neptune, with a crown, a long white beard and a trident, would come sitting in a sort of mussel shell, accompanied by two sirens. Then followed a throng of sledges arranged with sails like boats and commanded by the Admiral or the Czar."

In 1715, Peter, with great festivities and noisy amusements, married the seventy-year-old "Prince-Pope" Zotov to a sixty-year-old woman by the name of Pashkova. To the sound of cannons and music and to the ringing of bells from all the churches,

the bride and groom, dressed in full cardinal's attire, were married in the cathedral of Peter and Paul by a ninety-year-old priest. Throngs of people followed the procession, shouting, "The Patriarch is married! The Patriarch is married! Long live the Patriarch and the Patriarchess!"

Bergholtz describes the launching of a ship which took place in July, 1721.

"The Czar, the Prince-Pope and all his cardinals, the senators, and a large number of the first men of the empire were present. No one was allowed to leave the ship until word was given. Almost all were drunk. The Great Admiral wept like a child. Prince Menshikov was so intoxicated that he fell down and was taken home by his servants. The prince of Moldavia was quarrelling with the *Oberpolitseimeister;* here a couple were fighting, there another couple were drinking and swearing everlasting brotherhood and fidelity." (Rambaud.)

But no matter how great the difficulty of assimilation, or the opposition to his reforms, Peter the Great laid the foundation for Russia's future. He turned the course of life sharply into a new channel, though it was only in its subsequent evolution that the signs of his beneficent influence on the growth of Russia could be seen.

It must be realized, however, that Peter's reforms did not make an immediate change in women's

lives. They at first touched only the upper class, and even here they were brought into effect little by little, encountering strong opposition. The patriarchal system had taken deep roots in the minds of men and women alike. In other classes, seclusion and isolation of women were customary even in the eighteenth century, especially in the provinces. Up to the present century there were still to be found many persons who sighed for the principles of the Domostroi and tried to practice them whenever they could.

Peter's reforms had a beneficent effect in strengthening and developing the property rights of women, the tendency to acknowledge which began to be noticeable at the end of the seventeenth century. The dowry of the wife, for instance, was returned to her relatives in case of her death without children. A woman, under Peter's reforms, remained full mistress of her property and received the right to dispose of it without the consent of her husband. Although before the time of Peter the Great a woman was mistress of her property by law, by common law she was the property of her husband. Therefore, as a matter of course, she had no control of her property. Later, during the reigns of the Empresses, women were presented with estates and serfs. Distinction between the wife's and the husband's property had been definitely estab-

lished by a decree in 1731 and a decision of the Senate in 1753.

The reforms of Peter woke the women of Russia from the seven-hundred-year-long slumber by which they had been completely stupefied.

The first sign of this awakening was to be seen in the advent of women to the throne. After Peter's death in 1725 the country for over half a century was under the control of women, and their influence on the whole proved favorable to reforms.

Six women occupied the throne of Russia during that period, the most prominent of whom were Elizabeth, daughter of Peter the Great (1741-1761), and Catherine the Great (1762-1796).

Elizabeth ascended the throne sixteen years after her father's death. She was about thirty years old, beautiful and tall, with an engaging, friendly personality, a quick bright mind, a joyous, kind-hearted, lively disposition, a simplicity and sincerity in her relations with others. She soon won the hearts of her subjects. On the other hand she was prudent, reserved, and had inherited from her father the knowledge of how to choose and keep capable men. Above all, she was persistent in promoting the welfare of Russia and in following the policies of Peter the Great.

Her reign was prosperous. She worked for the development of the country's material prosperity.

She abolished capital punishment in 1744, and her reign knew not a single execution. She created new towns. She rejected German influence and brought Russia into closer contact with France. The twenty years of her rule were spent in a constant effort to give to the Russian people an opportunity to express itself. The language was progressively improved, and writers appeared. The Russian theatre became active and began to distinguish itself. The first history of Russia was written. The Academy of Science established by Peter began to assert itself. The first university was established in Moscow; private boarding schools were opened, not only in St. Petersburg and Moscow, but also in provincial towns. A few prominent men saw the need for education if progress was to be attained, and as a result two high schools were established for boys.

For the girls, however, during the reign of Elizabeth good manners, knowledge of dancing, tact in personal relations, and knowledge of foreign languages were valued above all other educational accomplishments by both Russians and foreigners.

The women very readily came out of seclusion into the world; but although they speedily acquired its superficial customs, they were unable in so short a time to change their whole character and habits.

Even in the royal family examples of unimaginable superstition and coarseness were to be found.

Shashkov tells us that women's ignorance was so great that even the Empresses were no exception. Catherine I, the wife of Peter the Great, could not even sign her name. Anna Ioannovna (1730-1740) was as superstitious and ignorant as a boyarina of the sixteenth century. She even wore the old national costume at home and would sit for hours listening to the chatter of the jesters, amused by their grimaces, or to the songs of her maids of honor, or watching the soldiers of the Guards with their wives dancing the Russian national dance.

Elizabeth's life was not much more intellectual than that of her predecessors. She loved best to hear stories told by old women who were brought to the palace from the streets and the market places, and while she listened, it is said, she had someone scratch her heels! Elizabeth was superstitious and also very ignorant; she did not even know that Great Britain is an island.

To control at least the external manifestations of such an appalling lack of culture, attention was directed principally to manners. The higher nobility had foreign tutors and governesses to teach good manners and their indispensable accompaniment—the French language. There were, however,

some parents who tried to inspire a love of reading in their children.

The government of Elizabeth, like that of Peter, neither encouraged nor forbade the education of women. There is only one instance in which Elizabeth took action in furnishing it, and this concerned the midwives, who up to that time had practiced without having received any preparatory instruction. In 1754 a decree was issued ordering the establishment of two schools for midwives, one in St. Petersburg, the other in Moscow. These were the only steps the government took towards helping women.

It would not be fair, however, to close this chapter without reference to two distinguished women of Elizabeth's reign. One of these was Catherine Sumarokova. Her father was the well-known writer and playwright Sumarokov (1718-1777). She was known as the first woman poet and was praised by everybody for her intelligence. The most cultured men of the Empire found pleasure in her conversation. She married the author Kniaghinin. Her first poem was printed in the magazine *The Busy Bee* in 1757. It was an elegy in which the author, writing in the person of a man, pictured his sufferings at parting with the woman he loved, who had deserted him. Catherine's father considered it indecent for a woman to write poetry treat-

ing of love and he made his daughter write as a man, though the poem was signed by her own full name.

The other was Natalia, daughter of Count Sheremetiev and wife of the unfortunate prince Ivan Dolgoruky. She was engaged to Ivan and could look forward to a brilliant future. But on the death of Peter II (1727-1730) the Dolgoruky were exiled because of court intrigues. Natalia persisted in marrying Ivan, in spite of the disfavor into which his family had fallen, and of her own family's opposition. She was a person of high moral qualities and in her memoirs she gives expression to the fine sentiments of her heart.

"Just think how little honorable it would have been for me to be willing to marry him when he was in prosperity, and to refuse him when he was unfortunate; but I had made up my mind, when I had given my heart to a man to live or die with him, and to allow no one else to have any participation in my love; I did not understand what it meant to love one person one day, and another the next; such is the fashion now-a-days (i.e. at the time she wrote these memoirs, just before her death in 1771), but I showed the world the constancy of my affection. I was the companion of my husband in all his sufferings, and now I speak the very truth when I say that, in the midst of my misfortune, I

never repented of my marriage, nor murmured against God." Prince Dolgoruky was publicly executed at Novgorod soon after their marriage, and Natalia became a nun in the year 1758. (W. R. Morfill.)

The sixteen years between the death of Peter and the accession of Elizabeth had not been in the least favorable to the growth of the nation. Nor indeed did society under Elizabeth show signs of great progress. But Elizabeth accomplished one important thing: her reign prepared the way for bringing up the new generation under new principles, and thus made possible the education of the men who later helped make famous the reign of Catherine the Great—who was destined to fulfill at last the reforms which Peter had begun.

CHAPTER VI

ELIZABETH appointed her nephew, the son of her sister Anee and the Duke of Holstein, to succeed her, and after her death he became emperor and took the title of Peter III. From the first, Peter aroused dislike. He was a drunkard, gross, tactless and unrestrained. He made himself unpopular particularly by breaking off the war with Prussia and negotiating an alliance with that country by his admiration for Frederick II of Prussia; and by his military reforms whereby he sought to reorganize the Russian army on the lines of the Prussian system. The discontent he thus provoked caused the people to turn their attention to his wife Catherine, who was known not only for her cleverness and education, but also for her love and respect for everything Russian. She was also known to be unhappy in her married life, for Peter threatened to shut her up in a convent, so that he might marry one of her ladies-in-waiting.

Catherine, then Sophia of Anhalt—a small German duchy—had married Peter when she was only fifteen, but even at that early age she had come to understand that her husband was not a man on

whom she could depend. She decided therefore to take her destiny into her own hands and make it a brilliant one. She mastered the Russian language, kept her eyes and ears open to everything going on around her, studied the people, and very cleverly established friendly relations with the Russian court.

When Catherine's son Paul was born, it was the Empress Elizabeth who undertook his education, and Catherine thus found herself free to devote all her time to things which interested her. She read a great deal and received all the new books from France as they appeared. At this time also she started a voluminous correspondence with prominent men.

Gifted with an extraordinary capacity for steady work, Catherine lost no time in preparing herself for statesmanship, for she longed to achieve great things. Her continual misunderstandings with her husband forced her to live somewhat in seclusion, and this gave her the opportunity to surround herself with devoted friends who later helped her in the overthrow of the hated Peter.

Among these friends there was a young girl whose exceptional love for study and reading found an equal only in Catherine. This girl was Princess Catherine Dashkova, whose memoirs give a vivid

record of her period. Dashkova, *née* Voronzova, was the sister of the lady-in-waiting whom Peter wanted to marry. Dashkova had lost her mother when almost a baby and had been brought up in the home of her uncle, Count Panine, the tutor of Catherine's son Paul. From early childhood she had had a great love for reading which was stimulated by the education she received. At thirteen she was reading Bayle, and Montesquieu, Grimm and Voltaire and other philosophers of the eighteenth century. She was keenly interested in history, and was often to be seen in animated conversation with some one of the ambassadors, savants, or foreign artists who were constantly at her uncle's house. Such extraordinary tastes in a young girl, especially at that time, could not fail to attract the attention of Catherine. Dashkova, on her part, was deeply impressed by the striking personality of Catherine, and she devoted herself heart and soul to Catherine's interests. Knowing Peter's attitude towards his wife, Dashkova realized that in order to achieve anything the existing régime would have to be overthrown and Catherine made regent. She was convinced that Catherine would give Russia the liberties preached by the philosophers of the eighteenth century. Dashkova began to lay plans. She found allies in her uncle and several other high

officials, men whom Peter had in some sort offended or who had been abroad and had become impregnated with constitutional ideas.

While Princess Dashkova was busy plotting in the court circle, other friends of Catherine were occupied in winning the army to their side. This other group was suspicious of Princess Dashkova because of her relationship with Peter's favorite, and kept its work secret. When the whole plot was well-nigh completed and the conspirators were so sure of success that they gave no more heed to prudence, the project almost failed through the indiscretion of one of their number who was arrested. Princess Dashkova, notified of the arrest, lost no time in going at midnight and in man's attire to warn the conspirators of the danger. It now seemed that their only chance of success would be in immediate action. One of the plotters at once galloped to Peterhof, Catherine's summer residence, with the word. Catherine dressed in haste and went to the barracks of one of the regiments of the Guards. The soldiers rose up and acclaimed her Empress. The revolt spread from one barrack to another. Catherine, in the uniform of an officer and on horseback, accompanied by Princess Dashkova, also mounted and dressed as an officer, proceeded to review the troops. Everywhere she was acclaimed Empress. The whole uprising was over

in a few hours and not one drop of blood had been shed.

The Emperor, who at first did not believe the report of the revolt, finally signed an act of abdication, and died four days later on his way to imprisonment in the fortress of Schlüsselburg.

This happened in July, 1762. Catherine passed the first years of her reign in efforts to make her position secure, for in spite of her erudition and capacity for observation she did not yet know Russia. She travelled extensively in order to acquaint herself with the conditions of her realm. She listened patiently to advice from anyone who wanted to give it. She had to act with great care, continually manœuvring between what she wanted to do and what others wanted her to do.

Catherine described herself to Prince Viazemsky, for thirty years her prime minister, and this brief sketch is perhaps the best we have of her character. Here is the translation of this letter, as found in Mr. Baring's *Russian People:*

"It is as well that you should know with whom you have to deal. You will find that I hold no other views than the welfare and the glory of my country and I desire nothing else save the weal of my subjects, to whatever rank they may belong. My thoughts turn solely to one goal, namely, that within as well as without, the kingdom should en-

joy order, prosperity, and peace. I am exceedingly fond of the truth, and you may say everything to me without fear, if only profit may ensue to the business in hand. I hear from all that you are an honest man; and I hope to prove to you by experience that at my court men with such qualities can live happily. I will also add that I do not ask for flattery, but only for sincere intercourse and steadfastness in the execution of your business."

The genius of Peter the Great had overturned as if by magic the old order of national life in Russia and presented to the world a new and equal member of the family of nations, outwardly civilized. But the layer of civilization was thin, and under it the roughness of the old Russia only too often appeared. It needed all the genius of Catherine the Great to begin to effect the change from outward civilization to inward culture and to bring about true intellectual growth in the nation. She was a worthy successor to Peter, and it was his work that she continued, though she turned her attention more to the intellectual and moral side of life than he had done. Being a true daughter of her time, Catherine eagerly followed the intellectual development of the century, and, although she did not agree with all the ideas evolved, in the main she accepted and sought to apply them to the organization of the national life of Russia.

At the end of the first year Catherine saw that she was capable of managing the Empire alone and she took the reins of government firmly into her own hands. Catherine was right in saying that she had the nation's welfare at heart. Her reign was the richest in Russian history. By conquest and treaty she enlarged the boundaries of Russia, in the South through the war with Turkey in 1769 gaining access to the Black Sea, and in the West by the division of Poland in 1772. But it was in its development of intellectual life in Russia that Catherine's reign was particularly important.

Catherine, of all Russian potentates, was the most zealous patron of literature, art and science. In her reign began a literary movement much influenced by French writers. Russian poetry and prose appeared and also translation of novels and serious books. In the 'fifties magazines were first printed, many of which were satirical. A permanent Russian theatre was established in St. Peterburg where Russian plays were staged by Russian actors. There was also a French theatre in St. Petersburg and an Italian Opera. In 1757 the Academy of Art was founded. In 1765 an Economic Society was formed on the model of a similar society in England to deal with the study of national economy. The Academy of Science was reorganized.

In the sphere of science Princess Dashkova was a valuable assistant to Catherine. After Catherine's ascent to the throne, she had found herself, despite her expectations, relegated to a secondary position. The former confidante, however, had been too clever to take offence. For a while she devoted herself wholly to her family. She had lost her husband when she was only twenty years old, and she now decided to go to Western Europe to educate her elder son. Thus she had spent about eight years away from Russia, in Germany, France, and England, sparing no effort to give her son the best possible education.

On her return to Russia Princess Dashkova was received by Catherine with many signs of favor. She was presented with a palace and an estate, and was nominated President of the Academy of Science. In that capacity she fully justified the confidence of the Empress. Her scholarship and her knowledge of men were of great value in reorganizing the Academy and establishing it on a higher level. She took part also in the foundation, in 1764, of the Russian Academy and in the composition of the dictionary published by the Academy, which was completed in three years. She also issued maps of the Russian Empire, and edited a literary magazine with the collaboration of Catherine.

Catherine the Great and Princess Dashkova were the only highly educated and cultured Russian women of their time. Princess Dashkova, in spite of the wealth and power she possessed, never gave up her studies and her reading, believing sincerely that the best asset a person could have was personal ability. In educating themselves these two women set an example to other Russian women.

The greatest merit of Catherine, however, consists in her efforts toward the promotion of education for women. To understand the tremendous import of her work and its influence on Russian women, it is necessary to survey briefly the state of society of that time and its attitude towards women and their education.

Peter's reforms had drawn women out of seclusion, but while women now manifested outward signs of independence, their freedom was of a kind which seeks expression in extremes.

"If in ancient Russia," says Soloviev, "woman was humbled to servility, during the reign of Catherine II, she played sometimes the principal rôle, despotically ordering her husband about, donning his uniform, and even taking command of his regiment. Princess Dashkova, not satisfied with the title of President of the Academy of Science, aspired to become a colonel of the Guards. The Academy of Science published, undoubtedly under

the indirect influence of Dashkova, a book entitled 'Of the nobleness and preeminence of the feminine sex,' proving that the remarkable feminine sex excels the masculine."

It might have been expected that with the increasing significance of women in society, concern for their education would likewise grow. But this was not the case. The education of women, even in the upper classes, remained extremely poor. When education in general was at its lowest, in Peter's time and immediately after, the women had kept pace with the men; but as Russians became better acquainted with Western European culture, the women were left farther and farther behind. Their knowledge of foreign languages did not serve as an incentive to further studies. It remained for a long time the only aim of education, and even hindered study of the Russian language or other subjects.

In Russian families of that time even educated men were rare, although measures had been taken which made boys seek education—they were compelled to go to schools and were sent abroad to complete their studies. No such measures existed for women; they had no serious interests. Apart from two or three private schools, there were no schools for girls, and in the provinces, far from the brilliance of the capitals, there were few girls

who knew even how to read and write. The indifference of the government and also the results of the bondage of the *terem* were responsible for this condition.

In the aristocratic families of Russia even up to the eighteenth century, both boys and girls received their education at home. In a superficial way they were taught the Slavonic and Russian alphabets, the psalms, the prayers, and the Bible. Writing was not considered obligatory; and if some women knew how to use the pen, probably they alone were able to decipher their own writing.

Russian society of Catherine's time was indifferent to the questions that stirred Western intellectuals. Young Russians sent abroad to complete their education acquired little more than exterior polish, and brought back only frivolity, conceit, and contempt for all that was Russian. Even those who seemed to have espoused Western ideas made no effort to translate into action the theories which they preached so well.

A captain of the French Army, Bellecourt, who was in Moscow in 1774, gives the following description:

"The Russian women who have visited Paris have in the great majority assimilated and brought back with them the bad manners of our 'petites maîtresses.' Good manners they have not acquired

at all, but remain far from them both in agreeableness of conversation and of mind, and in respectability of social intercourse and dress. The ladies who have not been abroad try to copy those who have, but succeed only in copying their bad manners. The women in Russia like strong liquor and strong wine, and drink as much as their husbands. The ladies as well as the men are very cruel to their serfs."

The level of interest, especially for women, was so low that corporal punishment was considered an amusement. A certain major of artillery, Danilov, in his memoirs (1771) tells that he lived as a boy with a relative of his family, a widow by the name of Matrena Petrovna, who was very fond of cabbage soup. When the soup was served, the cook was called into the dining room and wantonly flogged while the widow ate with great relish, heightened by the cries of her poor victim.

Such was society in Catherine's time. Catherine the Great was the first to understand the futility of the existing system of education and to see the need of a new plan in general, and especially for girls. Her idea was to create by means of education a new race—fathers and mothers who would be able to transmit to their children the fundamental and good principles which they themselves had received. To

this end she proposed to establish boarding schools where the children should be taken at five or six years of age and kept until they were eighteen or twenty. Thus the influence of parents and relatives was to be removed, and the children were to have constantly before them the example of fine characters. Her principal purpose was to take the children away from the frivolity and depravity of manners of the society of her epoch.

Catherine was well aware of the attitude of the majority towards education, and in her comedy: "O, time!" she thus characterized it: "I do not see," says Mme. Chudikhina, "any reason for teaching a girl how to read and write. That will be of no use to her! The less a girl knows, the fewer lies she tells!" The satirical paper *The Painter*, as we find it in Likhacheva's *Materials for the History of Education of Women*, ridiculed society in the following words:

"Learned men are funny enough," says Stchegolikha (Woman-fond-of-finery), "but our sisters who are learned—Oh! they are perfect fools! They are funny beyond measure! It is not for the sake of geography that nature gave us beautiful faces; neither for mathematics have we received sharp and shrewd intelligence; not for the sake of history have we been endowed with captivating voices; not for the sake of physics has a soft heart been bestowed

upon us. A learned woman! Fu! How awkward this sounds! In the art of 'knowing how to be liked' all our sciences are comprised!"

This disfavor of public opinion Catherine disregarded, as she saw clearly that no government could progress without education. Her first step was the foundation in May, 1764, at the Smolny nunnery, a few miles from St. Petersburg, of the Educational Society for two hundred girls. The program of studies in the earlier years included religion, foreign languages—French, German, and Italian—arithmetic, drawing, dancing, music, and handiwork. Later geography and history were added, also literature, which consisted of reading historical and moral books, and architecture, heraldry, experimental physics, sculpture, woodcarving, and housekeeping.

The next year a school for daughters of tradesmen was established at the same place, but run separately. The program of studies comprised handiwork, religion, Russian and foreign languages, drawing, arithmetic, and dancing. The graduates of this school were either married, or assigned to some service in the Educational Society.

We have seen that in founding the Educational Society, or, as it was called later, the Smolny Institute, Catherine aimed at refining the manners of society through a new system of education entirely

different from any previous one. The results were not what Catherine had anticipated. The persons placed at the head of the Institute performed their duties conscientiously; but unfortunately they themselves belonged to the very society which Catherine intended to reform. They had been assigned to a work which was completely new to them, and often did not understand what they were expected to do. They were kind to the children and applied the laws of the Educational Society to the letter, but without comprehending its spirit.

Neither did the Smolianki—as the pupils of the Educational Society were known—acquire any knowledge. Best of all they knew French, and it was not altogether their fault that they did not show much progress in other subjects. History, geography, and physics were taught in foreign languages which the pupils did not know well enough, and badly taught because the teachers did not know the languages thoroughly themselves. Such teaching could not inspire any love of study in the girls, and the Smolianki, leaving the school with relief, threw books aside and gave no thought to the continuation of their education.

Although the children were taken from their families when they were very small in order that no bad influence or example might affect their characters, their moral education was scarcely worth

anything. They were isolated from intercourse with the outside world until their characters and minds should be formed, and moral precepts strongly inculcated should protect them from bad examples. But theory is one thing and practice another. The children, detached from their families at a very early age, were deprived of family affection and unable to manifest this affection themselves, and, having no relations with the world, they grew up in ignorance of the conditions of life.

Also, life in the strictly guarded walls of the institute left its impression on the girls. The distinguishing trait of the Smolianki was an ignorance which often bordered upon stupidity. They would ask where was the tree on which grew bread! This naïveté was sometimes found charming when they were young, but, as years went by and they did not learn practical things, it became a subject for mockery. Their incapacity to put into practice what they had learned, their inability to make themselves useful, provoked frequent criticisms of the whole system of education. Furthermore, some of the good points they had learned—how to conduct a conversation, how to behave in society—were out of place in the provinces and among the lower nobility. Here the old conventions were still strong—Likhacheva tells us—and the code of feminine conduct held once and for all. According to this code

a girl who showed a liking for a man risked being condemned as immoral. In the provinces the patriarchal system was still in force, though under modified forms. A girl was considered "honest" only if she remained silent in the presence of men and answered briefly "Yes" or "No" when addressed. She was permitted to look through a slightly open door at a stranger, but upon meeting him she had to turn her head away and blush, even though it were her fiancé who spoke to her.

Soloviev cites the opinion of a contemporary about the Educational Society: "The girls who graduate from the Smolny are learned and well behaved only to the degree that mother-nature has bestowed these qualities upon them. The education they receive consists rather in teaching them how to perform on the stage,—as amateurs,—than in trying to change their hearts, dispositions, and minds."

This statement undoubtedly contained much truth. The proximity of the court, the constant visits of the royal family and foreign diplomats to the institute, contributed in no small degree to spoiling the girls, encouraging their pride, their vanity, and love for worldly pleasures.

Nevertheless, the Smolny had also a beneficial influence; if not on the mass of the girls, at least upon individuals. According to the testimony of

contemporaries, many of the Smolianki made good and worthy wives and mothers, and were helpful and affectionate companions to their husbands. Among these were the Princess Dolgorukova, Levshina, Catherine Nekludova, Princess Golovina, and others. Some of them stood far above the general level of society. Prince Dolgorukov, a poet and writer, who had many occasions of meeting institute graduates in the capital as well as in the provinces, characterizes them as "amiable," "nice," "gay," "good" and "good-tempered" girls. Likhacheva tells us that in 1800 a certain Edward Clarke came to Russia and wrote a book *Les voyages en Russie, Tartarie et en Turquie,* in which he says of the Russian women: "Among the nobility women seem to be much superior to men; they are gentle and sensitive, often well-educated, handsome and accomplished."

Society at the end of Catherine's reign was beginning to appreciate at least drawing-room accomplishments in its women—a good voice, a musical temperament, the playing of the harp or the harpsichord, a talent for theatricals, and, above all, literary inclinations. Catherine the Great and Dashkova were the first women writers of that epoch. They wrote stories and articles, hoping to encourage other women to try their ability in that field. During Catherine's time the number of women

writers reached seventy. The leading place was occupied by women poets; then came translators, followed by playwrights, and again by translators on questions of education, economy, and so forth; in a word, women tried every field of literature.

Next in line came Alexandra Th. Rjevskaya, who wrote memoirs of her life in the Educational Society. She was said to be devoted to science and art, wrote poems, painted, was musical, showed great love of reading, and was versed in French, Italian, and her native language. Another woman writer was Sumkova, *née* Khrapovitskaya. She also was cultured and knew five languages. Veliasheva-Volintzeva, who translated the works of Frederick the Great of Prussia, was known also as a poet and a writer. Three more translators deserve mention, Princess K. M. Menshikova, Princess Barbara Galizina, and a certain Nilova, who translated a philosophical novel.

The Painter and other satirical papers never refused to print articles by women. It is interesting to note that, when in 1769 Russian satirical papers began to appear, it was found necessary to establish a special course in the boarding schools to teach the girls to read them. The girls soon began to try their hand at writing. Not one, however, created a name worthy to be recorded in the history of literature; this is hardly surprising, for

during the half century since Peter's reforms the manners and customs of society had changed only superficially; and during Catherine's epoch systematic education for women was accessible to only a few. The heritage of many centuries of the patriarchal system still weighed heavily on the women, and it was not until the effects of Catherine's reforms had sunk deeper that the condition of the average woman was improved.

There are some darker aspects of Catherine's reign which, while they are eclipsed by her many great and good reforms, still deserve mention because of the influence they were to have upon Russia's future history. In the first place, she brought the power of the sovereign to a height which it had never reached even in the time of Peter the Great, and autocratic power is a well-known source of danger to those over whom it has control. Secondly, she laid the foundation of a bureaucratic system of government through ministers, and augmented the power of governors of the provinces. Thirdly, and worst of all, her reforms never touched the great masses of the people, and in spite of all her learned philosophic ideals she reduced the peasants to a state of complete serfdom.

Towards the end of her reign Catherine had quite forsaken the liberal ideas of her earlier years. She openly opposed the French Revolution. She be-

came suspicious of men who knew their own minds. Her last years were years of despondent weariness for the Russian people, marred by tiresome though successful wars with Turkey and Sweden, and subject to the arrogant orders of the Empress's favorites. With old age Catherine grew capricious and lost her influence.

Yet after her death in 1796, Russia forgot Catherine's shortcomings and remembered only the majestic figure of the Empress who by the force of her personality and her love of Russia had made the country an actual and a powerful empire. The name of Catherine the Great is forever connected in her country's history with an epoch which, in spite of much deserved criticism and much maligning that it has received at the hands of historians, may still be called brilliant.

CHAPTER VII

PAUL I (1796-1801), son of Catherine the Great, was a tyrant by nature. His mother's dislike of him, the fear that she might appoint her grandson Alexander as Emperor, and the continual intrigues of the court, strengthened his despotic disposition and made him suspicious to the point of insanity. For a word or a look he would exile his nobles to their furthermost estates. He believed that an empress could not have kept the army in hand and he introduced extremely severe disciplinary measures which made marching machines of the soldiers and stultified all human qualities.

This reign of insane terror could not, any more than the capricious, senile reaction of Catherine's last years, have promoted the development of a finer society. Nor could such conditions have improved the lives of women. The Empress Maria Feodorovna, wife of Paul I, dictated changes in women's education which were scarcely for its advancement. As has already been pointed out, the Institutes were extremely important factors in the education of women, being the only governmental educational institutions. Any reforms affecting the

Institutes were bound, therefore, to affect the development of women and of society.

The Empress Maria took charge of the Smolny Institute under a decree issued by Paul six days after the death of Catherine the Great. She entered into the minutest details of the household department and supervised also the training and the instruction of the girls. The changes she introduced in the organization of the Smolny Institute not only concerned superficial details, but modified fundamentally the whole system which Catherine had laid down as a basis of education for Russian youth.

Catherine had set herself the task of reeducating the people on principles that accorded with those state purposes which were the object in all her undertakings. But in spite of the progress which society had made during the thirty-four years of her reign, people were still far from understanding the necessity of education and they still needed to be led and inspired. Maria Feodorovna, placed at the head of feminine education, failed to see this. She was a person incapable of governing; incapable even of broad thinking. A German by breeding, she held the opinion that the principal place in women's education should be given to the development of the domestic virtues and the qualities of the heart.

Catherine the Great did not set sharp limits in distinguishing between the nobility and other classes, for she considered that no matter to what class her subjects belonged, the better educated they were, the better it would be for the government. Maria Feodorovna was a much stronger adherent to class principles. She acknowledged that all the subjects, noble as well as plebeian, had a right to the benefactions of the monarch, but each in his own sphere. She believed only harm could follow from mixing noble and plebeian girls, since their duties and destinies would always be totally different.

This opinion she carried into practice. Besides reforming the Smolny Institute, she opened several other Institutes in St. Petersburg, Moscow, and in a few large provincial cities. Some of these Institutes were for girls of the highest aristocracy only, some for girls of the ordinary nobility, some for the daughters of Government officials and army officers, and some for the daughters of tradesmen, professional and business men, and so on. The Empress was greatly concerned that no mistakes should occur in admitting the girls, and she most carefully outlined the measures that should be taken in order to prevent them. When in 1812 Napoleon approached Moscow, the pupils of the Institutes were taken out of the city in *telegas*—peasant wagons. It is said that upon learning this

the Empress wept bitterly and wrote to the Honorary Tutor of the Moscow schools, reproaching him for having ordered such an inconceivable measure: the cream of Russian nobility carried in *telegas! !*

In these days the nobility was rapidly moving towards ruin, and the Empress, among other reasons for establishing the Institutes, purposed giving its members an opportunity to educate their children without having to shoulder any financial burden, as there was no tuition to be paid in some of the Institutes.

Catherine's purpose—the refinement of the crude manners of society through education—had been completely abandoned immediately after her death; and the national and social ideas she had propagated were replaced by class and charity aims. The standard set by Maria Feodorovna was to create of the future generation of Russia's women a monarchist league devoted heart and soul to the dynasty of the Romanovs.

Towards the end of her life—according to Likhacheva—the Empress had the satisfaction of seeing that the basis she had laid for the organization of the Institutes was applied to the general education of Russian youth. In 1824 a decree was issued ordering the education of young people to conform with the high standard set for scholars.

This meant that young men and women should be brought up as faithful children of the church and loyal subjects devoted to God and the Czar, and that only if thus educated could a person be considered cultured.

The reforms undertaken by the Empress separated the education of women from that of the rest of Russian youth, creating a system with its own special feminine purposes which were in no way connected with those of the general educational problems of the government. But she failed to improve the instruction which the girls received. The teaching was still carried on in foreign languages which the pupils understood imperfectly. Good teachers were scarce; and besides they were required rather to conform to the rules set by the class inspectors than to know their subjects thoroughly. The pupils learned by a process of memorizing and repetition which enabled them to answer examinations well enough provided they had been well primed on the subject, but left them fundamentally ignorant and incapable of developing intellectuality or acquiring ideas. The purpose of the Institutes, according to the idea of the Empress Maria, was to make of the girls good wives and mothers and capable housekeepers. But they failed to do even this. They prepared the Russian girl for a society life, a life of leisure, developing her

aristocratic instincts to the highest degree, making her proud and vain, but leaving her ignorant of the simplest matters.

It would not be fair, however, to assign the whole blame for this state of things to the Institutes, which after all only answered the demands of society—a society which considered the ideal, well-educated girl of its highest aristocracy one who could speak French perfectly, had some knowledge of literature, but on all subjects had only superficial notions. One glance at life during the first twenty years of the nineteenth century will show in what measure the general state of Russian society was responsible for the ignorance of women.

The Russia of that time consisted of unrelated classes of people who were often hostile to one another. The nobility, especially the rich and prominent landowners, lived like appanaged princes, acting despotically and upon their own authority. They did not recognize the government authorities, whom they overruled and forced to obey their caprices. The life of the landowners on the estates was extremely dull and lazy. No intellectual or social interests agitated the country squires. They were given to excessive gluttony and drunkenness, to loose manners and a love of crude jokes which were often malicious. Sometimes a landowner would make the poorer nobles

of his neighborhood drink until they were dead-drunk and half-unconscious; then he would order his servants to put them in boats on wheels, attach to each end of the boat a live bear, and send the whole equipage rolling from the top of a hill into the river. Or he would have men sewed into bear-skins and dogs set upon them, or play other similarly barbarous tricks.

The landowners' houses were full of jesters and fools; and these offices were often filled by poor nobles. The landowners kept numberless servants, idle and costly, for the more servants a man had the more was he considered worthy of respect. They invited great numbers of guests to their estates, for, apart from the natural hospitality of the Russians, this was regarded as necessary to keep up the prestige of the nobility. On many large estates the host did not even know half his guests. On arrival they would be taken to the guest-rooms, assigned servants, told the hours of meals, and then left to themselves. Seldom were there less than fifty or sixty persons at the dinner table of a large landowner, and often there were many more. This reckless hospitality and the countless servants ate up all the landowners' money, especially if they tried to keep the pace without being fabulously rich; and many, having wasted all they

had, spent their old age in poverty, living on the estates and the charity of rich neighbors.

The whole tenor of early nineteenth-century life was meaningless. The women gossiped and flirted and spent their time aimlessly in distractions and pleasures. As in the time of Catherine, the nobility considered the pursuit of knowledge an unfitting occupation. Having neither confidence in nor respect for Russian teachers, they did not send their children to the governmental high schools, but preferred to give them a home education with French tutors and governesses. Unfortunately, the French Revolution had driven out of France many of the most worthless members of her society, ignorant persons, who brought only futile vanity, arrogant pride, out-of-place notions of race and class significance along with their prejudices, their indolence, and the corrupt ideas of French society of that day. They lauded everything French and despised everything Russian. Their pupils quickly followed their lead and sneered at Russia and things Russian. Good manners meant indifference, being blasé and bored, but at the same time they required attendance at every ball and every party for the sole sake of dancing and flirting; the Russian woman of that period seldom took a book in hand; even had she wanted to do so, she would have

felt ashamed of distinguishing herself in any way from the rest. At best, she would show an interest in household activities, drive to her fields, supervise the work, salt mushrooms and put up preserves for the winter, keep the accounts, and punish the peasants. Her amusements were her Saturday bath and the slapping of her servants.

There was, however, an inclination among women to self-analysis and mysticism. The loose habits of Russian high society in the eighteenth century, the absence of ideals, the servility of the nobles, the horrors of serfdom, had eventually produced a reaction, and the better type of Russian mind was reaching out for something that would satisfy the soul. It revolted also against the philosophical ideas and religious free thinking of Voltaire, so much in vogue at the end of the eighteenth century. Thus it came to take up Christian mysticism, with its religious exaltation, which had originated in the mystical teachings then widely spread in Germany. Although most of the Russian mystics did not understand the essence of the doctrine they had adopted, they were satisfied by its apparent meaning.

Sentimentalism was another trait to which many women of the early nineteenth century were given. In the last years of Catherine's reign, and as a result of the standards she had set, public respect

for women had begun to develop. The lead was taken by the writers, and literary expression of admiring homage to women reached its highest point in the novel *Poor Liza* by the writer and historian Karamzine (1792). This book made a great impression on Russian society. It was the story of a peasant girl who fell in love with a nobleman and finally drowned herself in a pond. The whole of literate Russia wept over her misfortunes, and the pond where the heroine was supposed to have committed suicide became a place of pilgrimage for sentimental youths. The sentimentalism depicted by Karamzine arose not simply from a desire to copy French models of literature, but from a sincere conviction that women have a beneficent influence upon society, an influence which brings general refinement of tastes and manners.

For twenty-odd years sentimentalism reigned supreme in Russia, bearing upon the formation of woman's character. But by 1810 a change in the public opinion towards women was to be noticed. Admiration melted away; protests against women's education grew louder and louder; and with increasing frequency appeals were made for a return to the old attitude. It was indeed a campaign against learned women, though in fact there were no really learned women in Russia, and only a few well-educated ones. The change was also re-

flected in literature. Writers who had been well-disposed and even indulgent towards women in general and women writers in particular, began to criticize them. Women were now expected to show modesty, submissiveness, timid distrust of their own capacities, and this not only in their literary, but also in their social or public activities.

"Another simple lesson will I give you,
You are a woman, then learn from childhood to
be submissive,
Not obstinate in your desires.
Obstinacy in a woman brings disaster,
As everybody has power to rule over a woman."

Thus wrote Anna Bunina, the leading poetess of the time in a verse dedicated to her young niece.

This change of public opinion only increased sentimentalism in the women. The works of women writers of that period were sentimental, vague, distinguished by a flowery style, full of French words. None of these works has any real value, but they are interesting as indicating the general characteristics of the women of their day.

Catherine the Great, while inculcating in at least a part of Russian society the love of reading, had been unable to impart her love for serious books. Most of those who liked to read, read novels. Generation after generation were brought up on novels,

both women and men, until they became unconscious of their actual surroundings and lived, spoke, and felt in the world of which they read. Karamzine's mother was so far influenced by the novels she read that she became dissatisfied with life, found her everyday duties dull, refused to see anyone, and spent her time in a deep pensiveness bordering on melancholy. His sister so completely lived the life of the English novels she read that she even called her friends by the names of their heroes and heroines. Many women who were considered very intellectual and who were connected by kin or friendship with the best Russian intellectuals lived in this atmosphere of novels. All the reading youth of Russia in the early nineteenth century took novels as its text-books. Especially, its thoughts on love it learned from them. They were responsible for suicides committed because of unreturned love, for the taking of the veil, and for the passionate letters of young men wherein whole pages were copied verbatim from the books.

But though the novel had a weakening effect on Russian society, yet it contributed a certain uplifting and refining influence. As the heroes and the heroines were always idealized, those who copied them thought about themselves in the same idealized terms. Pushkin himself expressed the opinion that novels, for lack of any better form of educa-

tion, taught Russians how to live, prompted their feelings and actions, and helped them to explain their state of mind and to express their sentiments. In Tatiana, in *Yevgueny Oneguine,* he revivifies and explains an epoch; for Tatiana is the prototype of a pensive, dreamy Russian girl formed under the influence of Karamzine's novels and the romantic verses of Zhukovsky which appealed so particularly to women of his day.

There was, however, a much deeper and stronger cause for the uplift of thought in Russia. The French Revolution, shaking the old conceptions of a governmental order of things and proclaiming the "rights of man and citizen"; and the epoch of Napoleon which constantly manifested the revived spirit of the French people, had a tremendous and beneficial influence upon the Russian people. It developed, in spite of the unfavorable conditions, some of those fine, loyal, self-sacrificing and strong characters for which Russian womanhood had since been noted.

When Alexander I (1801-1825) ascended the throne, Russian society seemed to arouse itself. Educated by LaHarpe, a Republican and a Swiss, Alexander at first firmly adhered to the ideas of the eighteenth century. He intended to become the benefactor of his country and give it all the liberties together with a constitution. But the con-

trast between his noble aspirations and the state in which Russia found herself at that time was so great that the young monarch continually vacillated between what he wanted to do and what he could do. The Tilsit peace with Napoleon in 1807 created considerable discontent in Russia. The Russian people were persuaded that Russia's relation with Napoleon before Tilsit had been worthy of a powerful nation, for they looked upon him as a plunderer tramping upon the rights of the peoples he subjected: accordingly, Russia had protested and fought with the marauder. Therefore, they could neither comprehend nor approve Alexander's friendship with Napoleon.

In 1808 public opinion began to murmur disapproval of the government. Alexander was aware of this unrest, and it precipitated a great change in his rule. His earlier liberalism had been dissipated; he considered himself the dupe of his generous ideas and the victim of universal ingratitude. At last he fell under the influence of the worst reactionaries and entrusted the government to his favorite, General Arakcheev, a militarist with a mania for cruelty, whose whole policy was one of oppression. Alexander I ended his reign in a complete renunciation of the ideals of his youth and abandoned himself to mysticism.

The year 1812 and the events in the world's

history that followed it marked an important epoch in Russia. A strong feeling of patriotism filled many a Russian heart; and, once love for Russia had been awakened, it never quite passed away. Moreover, the liberal ideas held by a part of society at the beginning of Alexander First's reign did not die when he gave them up. They grew, particularly among the officers of the army. These men had spent some time abroad in the campaigns against Napoleon, and on their return began to compare the order of things they found in Russia with what they had seen in Europe. The slavery of the greater part of the Russian people; the taxes which fell heavily on the poorer classes; the cruelty with which the authorities and the landowners treated those who were subject to them; the abuse of power found everywhere; the impudent embezzlement and the general grafting—all this could not escape the notice of men who had seen European culture. It was natural that these men who loved Russia should wish to establish in their country an order of things worthy of a great nation, to put an end to the lawlessness which reigned supreme and to institute in its stead law-abiding respect for human rights.

These men therefore organized a Secret Society, the members of which were later known as the Decembrists. The story of the Secret Society and

of the failure of their plot may be related in a few words.

After the death of Alexander I in 1825, in Taganrog, South Russia, the oath of allegiance was given in St. Petersburg to his brother Constantine, who, being the elder of his remaining brothers, was to succeed him on the throne. A few days later it became known that Constantine had abdicated in favor of his brother Nikolai. At the same time the conspirators learned that the State police knew of their activities. Although their plan of action had not yet been completely worked out, they decided to take advantage of the confusion produced by the temporary absence of a supreme ruler and openly demand reforms. They gathered on December 14 (26), 1825, in the Senate Square of St. Petersburg, followed by a few hundred men from several regiments of the Guards. The insurrection was quickly suppressed. Five of the leaders were hanged, while the rest—about a hundred young men—representing the best intellectual spirit of Russia, were exiled to Siberia.

In spite of their failure on this occasion, the members of the Secret Society and their followers exercised an immense influence, and particularly upon the women of their country. The wives and mothers of these men had learned through hard trials the meaning of duty; they had learned how

to give up with a smile what was dearest to their hearts; they had acquired a better understanding of the world. The young women, though they took no active part, knew about the Secret Society and its branches, catching here and there fragmentary information. The young wife of the Decembrist Fonvisine knew both the program of the Secret Society and the convictions of her husband, and Prince Volkonsky's sister shared the secret cares of her brother. The daughters, sisters, and relatives of the heroes of the Napoleonic wars, who formed the main body of the Secret Society, were brought up under the influence of a generation of men who gave their lives simply and unreservedly for their country. It is true that it was a very small group of women, but they were to set new standards for the future generations.

When the plot was discovered and disgrace fell upon its participants, the women showed both initiative and firmness in living and acting as they found necessary. Nikolai I was inexorable. He hanged and deported to Siberia the most promising young men of the army and the capital, and desired that the names of these insurgents, as well as the account of their deeds, should be erased completely from the memory of the people. Here the women stepped forward and demanded permission to rejoin their husbands, brothers, or

fiancés in Siberia. Not satisfied with making homes for the exiles they kept in continual touch with Russia, wrote letters, received books, and in many ways brightened the darkness of Siberian life.

Two figures especially stand out against the background of hard labor in Siberia. Princess Maria Volkonskaya, the daughter of general Raevsky, a hero of the Napoleonic wars, had received a good education, loved serious books, and had a beautiful voice which gave much pleasure to the exiles. In obedience to her father's will and because she felt that heroes who had risked their lives so many times could not be refused, she married Prince Volkonsky who was twenty years her senior and a comrade-in-arms of her father. In the first year of married life the young woman saw little of her husband because of his active participation in the Secret Society—about which he never told his wife —and also because of her ill-health. It was after the birth of her son and before her recovery from a severe illness that the Princess's husband, brothers, uncle, and other relatives were arrested. Her parents hid the truth from her, but she found it out and immediately decided to join her husband. In vain her mother cried, her father threatened, her relatives begged her to think of her son. She wrote a letter to the Emperor and received permis-

sion to follow her husband to Siberia. Nekrasov, one of the best lyric poets of Russia, wrote a poem dedicated to the Princess Volkonskaya and the Princess Trubetskaya entitled "Russian Women." He puts these words into the mouth of Princess Volkonskaya as she answers her protesting relatives:

"Alone he is, unsupported, I must hasten to him,
There only will I breathe freely,
I shared joy with him, his prison
I must share also. Such is the will of God!"

The authorities on her way tried to stop her, but she had a personal letter from Nikolai I permitting her to go. Arrived at the prison, she ran to the shaft where the exiles were working, and shocked by their terrible appearance and by the chains they wore, she knelt, and, before embracing her husband, reverently kissed his chains.

The Princess Trubetskaya was no less noble, though quite of a different type. She also came of one of the best families of Russia. Young, rich, and beautiful, she was noted for her extreme kindness toward and compassion for the suffering and unfortunate. But in spite of this gentleness she was capable of making and living up to the most irrevocable decisions when duty was concerned. In Nekrosov's poem, learning the fate of her husband, Princess Trubetskaya exclaims:

"I know, terrible will be
The life of my husband,
Let therefore mine be,
Not more joyful than his."

She starts on her journey and after two months of continual travel arrives in Irkutsk, where the General-Governor of the province, an old friend of her father, tries to dissuade her from her purpose and begs her to return to her home. He tells her of the horrors of the prison and says that she probably would soon die under the terrible conditions there. She replies:

"Let death be my fate,
I have nothing to regret,
I go, I go! I must
Die near my husband.
I have given a promise in my heart
To the end to do
My duty,—no tears will I bring
To the accursed prison.
His pride, his pride will I save,
Strength will I bring him!"

The Governor, having exhausted all other means of frightening her, tells her he will be obliged to send her on foot together with thieves and murderers, guarded by soldiers; but the Princess only reproaches him for not having told her this at once, and for having tormented her for a whole

week by putting obstacles in her way. The old soldier is overcome by such strength of character in a girl of twenty. He confesses that there are really no obstacles in her way, and that he had done what he did for the sake of her father; then with tears in his eyes, the old man gives orders to get her carriage ready.

Another of these brave women was Alexandra Muraviova, Princess Volkonskaya's most valued companion in misfortune. Hers was an extremely delicate nature, an ardent heart, an exalted character. She worshipped her husband, who responded little, being absorbed in deep meditations, and had followed him into exile. But she had left two children in Russia, and her heart, torn between passionate attachment to her husband—a victim of duty—and maternal affection, could not endure the struggle. She died very young.

The Baroness Rosen joined her husband in Siberia in order to make a home for him. She was his superior intellectually and he, realizing this, tried during their time in Siberia to make himself her equal. By hard, incessant study and with the help of his companions he finally succeeded, and the young couple reached such a spiritual unity that after returning to Russia they always spoke of their exile in Siberia as their happiest time.

A little apart from the other women stands Na-

talia D. Fonvisina. The only child of a Marshal of the Nobles, she was brought up on the family estate, where a literary education and even some European culture blended easily with old Russian customs and simple piety. Her mother, a devout woman, took pleasure in sheltering all sorts of monks and pilgrims, and the girl, who loved to listen to the talk of these pious visitors, to their fantastic legends of the saints and their deeds, acquired a life-long disposition to mystic ecstasies. She was a strange compound of tradition, popular superstition, and sympathy for the liberal ideas of that time, and she possessed an indomitable force of emotions, intolerant of compromise. It was not only because of her love for her husband that she followed him into exile; it was also because morally she was his accomplice, as she knew and shared his convictions.

The wives of the Decembrists were few in number—some ten or twelve—but they left a deep impression on the minds of their countrymen. They showed that Russian women were capable of high ideals, that they had an acute sense of moral duty and a capacity for unreserved self-sacrifice. They were the forerunners of these other strong women revolutionaries who were to come in the latter part of the nineteenth century.

CHAPTER VIII

THE revolt of the Decembrists made a great impression on Nikolai I, who was the incarnation of despotism and intolerant of any manifestation of greater individual freedom. During the thirty years of his reign (1825-1855) he did not once depart from a policy of reaction which heavily impeded the development of the Russian people. Russia had experienced reaction during the last years of Catherine, and also during the second part of the reign of Alexander I; but nothing could compare with the sternness of Nikolai. Every free expression of thought was mercilessly suppressed. The Russian government actually started a campaign against education, and after the French Revolution of 1848 it took extremely severe measures against the innocent Russian universities. But this all-embracing despotism did not destroy the liberal forces then gathering in Russian society; it only strengthened them.

The classes surrounding the throne revelled in ignorance. The educated young men of Alexander's time were replaced by empty-headed youths who loved gaiety and carousing. Ignorant men

became statesmen because the only thing required of them was absolute obedience to the will of the Czar. But the Russian intellectual class, formed mostly under the influence of Western ideas and culture, became more and more hostile to the existing state of affairs and more and more conscious of the beneficent effect of education. The young people organized themselves in groups for self-education and intellectual development. More mature men saw clearly the utter inadequacy of the prevailing order and the need of reforms. Questions concerning the position of women in society, the conditions of their life and education, were revived with intensified interest, and the attention of Russian writers was attracted especially by the question of woman's education. In passing it should be noted that the novels of George Sand played an important rôle in awakening this interest. Everybody, even the authoress's most bitter antagonists, read them.

The movement did not die out. In the 'forties the importance of woman's position in society and in the family, and in relation to the general welfare, was fully realized. In spite of the reactionary spirit of that time, the necessity of bettering woman's education continued to influence Russian literature, which criticized the education girls were then receiving. The development of memory in-

stead of independent thought, which resulted in stolid aversion to studies, was especially condemned. Criticism also extended to the system of education in the Institutes. While making them strong adherents of monarchism, the Institutes developed in the girls, together with political convictions, a capacity for analysis, which later the pupils turned to account in criticizing those very tendencies toward monarchism under which they themselves had been brought up.

With the growth and cultural progress of society, the attitude towards women necessarily underwent a process of evolution. Thinking men in Russia looked upon woman as a companion in life; they not only demanded from her outward attractiveness and moral qualities, but also intellectuality and education. Thus, at least in the consciousness of the best men of Russia in the 'forties, woman's education marked a considerable advance. These men, in propagating their ideals for the growth of Russian society, inculcated them also in the women of their circles, awakening a taste for study, a desire for knowledge, and a sense of their own dignity.

Writers began to represent in their heroines cultured women longing for knowledge. Turgenev, one of Russia's best novelists of the epoch, stands unrivalled in his descriptions of the life of his time. His novels cover a period of more than

thirty years—1845 to 1883—and picture the leading types of the Russian intellectual class as it went through successive modifications. Turgenev was usually obsessed by any new type of leading man or woman in Russia until he reproduced it in a novel. Prince Kropotkin, commenting upon Turgenev's knowledge of the human heart, points out that he understood especially the heart of a young, honest, and thoughtful girl when she awakes to higher feelings and ideas, and her awakening takes, without her realizing it, the shape of love. Love is the leading motive of all Turgenev's novels. In this there is nothing unnatural, for love had been the only driving motive in the life of the women of Russia from the beginning of history up to that time.

Turgenev's novels are such masterpieces, his types are such graphic pictures from real life, that in studying some of his heroines it is possible to see clearly the character of the women of the 'forties and 'fifties and also to understand something of the women of the following decades.

The following extract is from one of Turgenev's short novels, *Correspondence*, in Prince Kropotkin's translation. It gives an insight into the mind of a girl of twenty-six who is writing to a childhood friend:

"Again I repeat that I do not speak of the girl who finds it difficult and hard to think. . . . She looks around, she expects, she asks herself when the one whom her soul is longing for will come. . . . At last he appears; she is carried away by him. She is like soft wax in his hands. Happiness, love, thought—all these come now in streams; all her unrest is settled, all doubts resolved by him; truth itself seems to speak through his lips. She worships him, she feels ashamed of her own happiness, she learns, she loves. Great is his power over her at that time! . . . If he were a hero, he could have fired her, taught her how to sacrifice herself and all sacrifices would have been easy for her! But there are no heroes nowadays! . . . Still he leads her wherever he likes; she takes to what interests him; each of his words penetrates into her soul—she does not know yet how insignificant and empty, how false words can be, how little they cost the one who pronounces them, how little they can be trusted. Then, following these first moments of happiness and hopes, comes usually—owing to circumstances—the separation. Happy the girl who at once sees that this is the end of all and will not soothe herself by expectations."

The men of Turgenev's time were incapable of action. Conditions prevailing under the régime of Nikolai left no possibilities whatsoever for the application of a thinking man's energy. Service of any sort meant being an obedient mannikin in

the hands of a tyrant who ruled a slave State. Words and not actions characterized the Russians of the 'forties.

In his novel *Rudin,* Turgenev pictures the life of a girl who has grown up in the quiet of a village, but has in her heart, mind and will the germs of that which moves human beings to higher actions. The hero's spirited words, his appeals to what is grand and worth living for, inspire her. She is ready to follow him, to support him in the great work which he so eagerly and uselessly searches for, but he proves to be her inferior.

Turgenev, says Kropotkin, thus foresaw as early as 1855 the coming of that type of woman who later played so prominent a part in the revival of Young Russia. Helen, in *On the Eve,* is a further development of the same type. Helen is not satisfied with the dull, trifling life in her own family, and longs for a wider sphere of action. "To be good is not enough, to do good—yes; that is the great thing in life," she writes in her diary. But whom does she meet in her surroundings? Shubin, a talented artist, a spoiled child, "a butterfly which admires itself"; Bersenev, a future professor, a true Russian, an excellent man, most unselfish and modest, but wanting inspiration, vigor and initiative. Thereupon comes Insarov, a Bulgarian patriot, entirely absorbed by one idea, the

liberation of his mother-country, and Helen's choice is settled.

In Helen we see the type of woman who a few years later joined heart and soul in all movements for Russian freedom, a girl with a rather vague but ardent love of freedom, ready to sacrifice everything for its sake. Turgenev tells us that the type of Helen was taken from real life.

Natalia Alexandrovna Zakharieva affords us another type of these women who imparted the vision of the Revolution and prepared for the transition to the tempestuous period of the 'sixties. She married Alexander Herzen, the widely known publicist of the 'thirties and 'forties who was a political exile. She was the daughter of Herzen's uncle and a serf and was brought up by an aunt, Princess Khovanskaya. She grew up under the severe surveillance of the housekeeper, never knowing a caress, always sternly instructed to revere her benefactress. The child tried to run away from this benevolence, but failing, she withdrew within herself, and thus lived quietly on with a growing distrust of people. The only person interested in her was the deacon who taught her reading and the Bible. He was a mystic and he developed devotion in her to such a degree of mystical ecstasy that she imagined she had seen and talked with Jesus Christ. When she was fourteen her aunt decided to make a lady of

her, and a governess was engaged to teach her languages. She remained the same reserved girl, keeping away from everybody except Herzen, whom she first timidly admired and later loved with all the force and depth of her soul. When in 1834 the students were persecuted and Herzen arrested, Natalia's deep sympathy, the clearness of her thought and the purity of her religious vision came to him as an unexpected comfort. She corresponded with him in his exile, and on his release they were married.

The change of attitude toward woman was not only noticeable in the literature. Society women were admired, their opinions had weight. Clever, lively, active women—like Princess Liven, Princess Bagration, Princess Gagarina, and Mme. Ophrosimova—gathered in their drawing-rooms the cream of the Russian intellectual class, after the manner of the famous French salons of the eighteenth century. Moscow had several literary salons which exercised great influence over its society and where the cleverest men of Russia met. It should be remembered, however, that there were still very few well-educated women at that time and that they stood high above the average mass of women, pointing the way to freedom and equality.

It is interesting, therefore, to note what kind of education girls of various social conditions re-

ceived in the 'fifties and to see how little women in general were prepared to meet any kind of liberating movement.

The noble girls of that time were brought up by governesses whose only care was to teach them to speak French perfectly, to dance well, and to play the piano. It was not necessary for a girl to know the Russian language or Russian history, while to know arithmetic was positively bad form. Of Russian literature she was permitted to have a slight knowledge in the verses of Pushkin and Zhukovsky, while it was considered reprehensible to read Gogol and the other realists.

In the family of a government official a girl who had reached six years of age was set to learn the alphabet which she was to master in one year. The next year was devoted to the study of the Old Testament. This much accomplished, the girl was taught how to write; to read some of Krilov's fables or some of Pushkin's verses—and her education was complete when she had learned addition and subtraction, division and multiplication, and the declensions and conjugations of the Russian language. The refining touches were added by teaching her to dance, to embroider, and to play small pieces on the piano. In her leisure time she would read all sorts of novels, mostly translated from the

French, and she probably had a passion for copying verses.

The daughter of a small government official was usually taught to read, to scrawl rather than to write, to sew; and later she would teach herself to dance and sing a few sentimental songs.

If the girl belonged to the merchant class and her father was rich, she would be taught the alphabet by the teacher of the parish school. This course lasted a year, and then, at the age of eight perhaps, she would be taught in a very superficial way to write. After this she educated herself by reading novels.

Poorer merchants and townspeople seldom gave any education to their daughters. At best the girls were sent to the chanter of the parish church, and in three or four years learned to read the prayers and the Psalter and sometimes to sign their names.

Priests and deacons usually gave their daughters only a religious education. This meant that when a girl was seven or eight years old she was taught to read in Slavonic—the language of the church books—the Psalter, and the prayers. At the same time she was taught to sew. Later she might be given some book which her brother, a student in the Ecclesiastical Academy, had perhaps forgotten during his vacation: it might have been a text-book of logic or some other subject from

which she might learn the alphabet, or it might have been a Latin grammar. To the parents' mind her education was now complete. She might unearth a book interpreting dreams, or a song-book, and learn by heart two or three pages, and this was likely to be the limit of her opportunities. From childhood she would also know that on Sundays she must go to church, that she must observe all the fast-days, prepare to receive the sacrament at least once a year, and later she would learn that she must marry a priest or a deacon and obey her husband in all things.

If we turn our attention once more to the education received by the girls in the Institutes, we find that no change had occurred there since the time of the Empress Maria Feodorovna, except that the personnel had become, if possible, still more dry and formal. A woman writer of the 'fifties, Nadejhda Kokhanovskaya, gives a vivid description of her hard life in one of the Institutes, where she was placed at the age of ten, and whence she graduated as one of the best pupils.

"The rustle of a silk dress simply made me tremble, I could not forget the days when we heard this magnificent rustle at the great and little levees of the Principal of the Institute, when, added to the sound of her voice and the lordly gesture of her hand, it froze our warm child's blood, and we

turned pale and stupid almost to idiocy. In the Institute I grew up a frightened girl, shut up in my shell. God alone knows how it is that my heart has not been hardened and this is one of His miracles; but they killed in me the bright unconcern of youth, its lively, impulsive, beautiful voice seeking to express a child's bright soul in a childish babble. They made me too serious for my age, timid, distrustful of my own capacities."

And though it was in the Institute that Kokhanovskaya had acquired her love for literature, the evils of the education she received were reflected in her whole outlook on life.

The deficiencies in a girl's education were sometimes made up for by her reading. Books might rouse her to thinking, to seeing the emptiness of her surroundings, even to try to get away from them, but such awakenings were usually of short duration. The habits inculcated from early childhood had such a hold on her that she had no strength, and even no real desire to fight them. There was nothing in her environment which could afford food for the intellect. As soon as a girl's education was considered complete, her new life began, a life full of great or small cares, or the oppressive emptiness of society activities, leaving her no time or desire to continue her education, especially as she would never have a chance to apply her knowl-

edge, except possibly as a governess or a music teacher.

What wonder, then, that we find no initiative in the Russian women of these decades, that they had little personality, that until the end of the 'fifties no interest existed for them but love; that they cared nothing for art, science, or social life; that their only aim in life was to be liked and surrounded by men?

Nevertheless, evolution continued on its way. While the majority of Russian women sank deeper in the mire of gossip and scandal and love intrigues, the few educated women kept on developing themselves. It must be noted, however, that they grew and developed outside the schools, and that their education was principally literary. But as the years went by the intellectual circles manifested increasing interest in political and social questions and in all branches of learning. Women shared these interests, imbibing new elements of thought, analyzing them and reflecting upon life. How out of place and odd these thinking women seemed amid the general life of Russia with its petty family quarrels, its city gaieties, its country uncouthness and stupidity, its cruel and depraved landowners! Unlimited parental authority still reigned, the despotism, inherited from the patriarchal system, which did not spare even the boys.

With marriage, the parental authority was seconded or replaced by the prerogatives of the husband. Marriage, for these girls who were keenly sensitive and given to self-analysis, was a very complex matter. Their ideals and their demands were high; their opinions irreconcilable. The women of the early nineteenth century had been contented to remain victims of parental authority, forced to live with husbands they did not love. They were supported in their sufferings by religion, by a profound faith, believing that such was the fate appointed by God. They had no will, no opinion of their own. In the women of the 'forties and later, religion began to blend with intellectual exercise and with a feeling of self-respect, of dignity. Their hearts yearned for individual freedom, for a chance to expand their intellectual capacities to the full.

The moods and the feelings of such women were bound to be reflected in literature, both in the work of men of the period, and in the development of women writers of power. A noted authoress of the time was Helen Gan. She was born in 1815, and as soon as she had learned to read, she began to show interest in serious books. The influence of her mother, known as one of the best educated women of the early nineteenth century, may be traced in all the tastes of the daughter. Married at sixteen to an officer, Helen Gan continued to edu-

cate herself in spite of the nomad life she was obliged to lead, constantly moving from place to place with her husband. During her wanderings she studied German, Italian, and English. French she already knew. She was fond of music and even composed. Those who knew her testified to her brilliant mind and wide knowledge, and to her modesty. She died at the age of twenty-four, already recognized as the best woman writer of her time. She wrote verses and short stories.

Contemporary with Helen Gan, three other women writers were mentioned by literary critics. They were the Countess Sara Tolstaya, the Countess Rastopchina, and Carolina Pavlova, daughter of Professor Jaenish of the University of Moscow, who was principally known as a translator of verses. Pavlova and Countess Rastopchina gathered in their salons the best writers and scientists of Russia. Zontag and Ishimova enjoyed a good and fully merited reputation during the same period. Their subjects were taken from the Scriptures and from Russian history, and their stories, written in a clear, simple style, were considered the best in the literature for children. Ishimova was an unusual woman, especially in the energy and persistence with which she pursued her career. Daughter of a poor government official, she educated herself by reading, and even learned English.

Among the women poets of the first half of the nineteenth century the best known was Julia Zhadovskaya. She received a good education under the supervision of her aunt, who passionately loved literature. The first volume of her verses appeared in 1846 and was met with apparent interest by the literary critics. As the theme for her verses Zhadovskaya took the continual conflict of a thinking woman with all the obstacles that opposed her growth.

A few years later another woman attracted the attention of literary critics. This was Nadejhda D. Khvostchinskaya (1825-1869). Her first works showed uncommon talent, a noble bent of mind, and sympathy toward all who suffer and are thwarted by fate. Khvostchinskaya was born in the province of Ryazan. Her father, though a small government official, encouraged in every way the love of literature in his daughter. In spite of the slight opportunities afforded by provincial life, Khvostchinskaya educated herself thoroughly. Her mother taught her French, but the other languages, including Italian, she acquired alone. She read all the classic literature of her own and of other countries. After reading several French novels she decided to attempt to write, carefully concealing the fact from her family. When her first verses were published in 1874 and her family learned of them,

her father was pleased, but her mother wept bitterly and declared: "God is merciful, she may get over it!" Provincial society considered her mentally deficient because of her writings, her dislike of social affairs, and her sympathy for the peasants.

Poverty made Khvostchinskaya write for forty years; and though her work was not always carefully finished, she never allowed anything to interfere with the leading thought in her novels. She depicts with masterful accuracy the provincial life in which she herself grew up. Nowhere can a person feel so lost, crushed, and solitary as in a provincial town where dullness, stupidity, and spite reign supreme; nowhere can public opinion be so oppressive, because instead of life there is a quicksand which sucks down everything that tries to live; nowhere do traditions of the patriarchal system so oppress the individual in his family.

When the liberating movement of the 'sixties took place, Khvostchinskaya, deeply impressed by the importance of the new ideals, joined the progressive forces and served them faithfully by her writings. She has been likened by critics to George Sand and George Eliot. Many of her novels have been read and reread and are interesting to people of all ages because of their graphic portrayal of life.

The French Revolution of 1848 had a profound

effect on Russia, which, while it did not produce a revolution, stirred Russian life to its depths and brought to the surface the revolutionary thought held in subjection by the iron grasp of Nikolai I. The Russian intellectual class began to fret under a form of government to which they had not become reconciled. Again, as before the advent of Peter the Great, Russia was on the threshold of reforms, and it was in this atmosphere of unrest that she found herself facing the disasters of the Crimean war.

CHAPTER IX

THE disasters of the Crimean war, culminating in the Sebastopol defeat, marked the end of the period of nobility's rule in Russia. Nikolai died in 1855 and Alexander II brought new hope to the oppressed country. To continue Nikolai's policy would clearly have meant complete destruction, and now a new era of reforms was at hand. The country was ready for them, the people realized their need. Alexander II restored in a measure the freedom of the press and suppressed restrictions which had been imposed upon the universities in 1848, but these were only the forerunners of the many reforms of his reign, among which the abolition of serfdom in 1861 was the greatest.

In 1856 appeared an article on the need of education by Professor Pirogov, a surgeon, pedagogue, and writer. This article was read everywhere—in palaces, in huts—and it inspired an educational movement not only in literature but also in society and in governmental circles. Suddenly realizing its ignorance, Russian society cast off its former lethargy, took up all sorts of questions, became interested in all branches of science. Everyone was

seized with a longing for knowledge and studied wherever possible. Many families organized classes to teach poor people to read and write. The founding of evening schools became in itself a special social movement.

In demanding education for the Russian people, Professor Pirogov did not forget the women. He pointed out that their education and development were vitally needed by the men and for the sake of the family, as an educated woman would necessarily be a better wife and mother. Women began to read serious books, attended lectures in private houses, and studied in libraries. They also made an attempt to get admission to the universities. In the autumn of 1859 the administration of the University of St. Petersburg decided, as an experiment, to permit women to attend the university courses. Many took advantage of this opportunity, though only a few followed the full course of studies, the majority preferring to take up only those subjects which interested them especially. Women were also admitted to the Medical Academy. In 1861 a commission was formed to revise the statutes governing the universities. It inquired of various universities whether women could attend with the men, take examinations, and obtain degrees. All but one answered in the affirmative. The Medical Academy likewise expressed its opin-

ion that women were capable of performing the duties of physicians. But unfortunately, while the commission was sitting, disorders broke out among the students. Several of the insurgents were arrested, among them one woman. This was sufficient to rob all women of the privilege of college education.

In 1862 certain university professors began to give lectures in the City Hall of St. Petersburg. Women continued to attend the Medical Academy, and in 1864 there were about sixty women studying medicine. But the Polish uprising against Russian rule in 1863 caused the government to grow more reactionary, and in the fall of 1864 the Medical Academy also was closed to women.

Some women, however, were not deterred from their object, but sought a college education abroad. Among these was the first woman physician of Russia, Nadejhda P. Souslova. She had received no better education than the girls of her time, but had prepared herself so well that in 1861 she was able to follow the courses in the Medical Academy. When the Academy was closed, she went to Zurich, where she entered the University. In 1866 she wrote from Zurich asking permission to take the examination entitling her to practice in Russia, whither she returned in 1867. The Medical Academy did not admit her to the regular examination

for physicians who had received their education abroad, but the President, with the consent of the Minister of Interior, allowed her to take the "colloquium"—a special examination open to foreign scientists whose knowledge was beyond doubt—before a special commission of members of the administration. Souslova passed this examination in 1868 and received her diploma with the right to practice medicine in Russia. But she first went to Vienna and London to study with the best specialists. Then she returned to Russia, where she built up a very large practice.

Not all women were as fortunate as Souslova. Vacancies for women were limited even in the foreign universities. The greatest difficulty, however, lay in obtaining permission to go abroad. The laws concerning passports in Russia have always been very strict, as they were even on the eve of the last Revolution of 1917. No person was allowed to remain twenty-four hours without a passport, and a woman had to secure the permission of her father or husband to receive one. In the 'sixties, in spite of liberal tendencies, many parents objected to their daughters going abroad. There was only one way out of these difficulties, and the women boldly took it: namely, to acquire a husband who would not interfere with his wife's plans. For more than a decade fictitious marriages were

contracted in extraordinary numbers, often by proxy, the contracting parties being in different parts of the country on their wedding day. It also happened that a couple thus married never saw each other, as the only duty of the husband was to provide a passport for his wife. Sophia Kovalevskaya, Russia's greatest scientist, had to have recourse to such a marriage.

Sophia Kovalevskaya, *née* Korvin-Kroukovskaya, was born in 1850 in Moscow, where she spent her babyhood. Then her parents moved to their estate, and it was there that her education began. From early childhood Sophia wanted passionately to study and manifested wonderful mental capacities, especially for mathematics. At the age of seventeen she decided to go abroad to devote herself to the study of this science, and for this purpose she contracted a fictitious marriage. She spent six years in incessant work, first in Heidelberg and then in Berlin. When she was twenty-four years old, she presented to the university of Göttingen three works of original scientific research: two on pure mathematics, and one on astronomy, each of which was adjudged worthy to be awarded the degree of doctor of philosophy. Her most noted work, which deals with analytical mechanics, has received the highest award of the French Academy.

The complexity of her character prevented Kova-

levskaya from giving herself wholly to science. She was keenly interested in many things, and sought satisfaction in the most varied phases of life. She attempted a literary career, and, though she began to write rather late in life, all her work bears the mark of genuine literary talent and of an original, exceptional personality. She studied psychology, and enjoyed analyzing people, herself included. She lived a very active life, fiery, agitated, enthusiastic, always striving, always seeking. She died in her prime in 1891, when she was professor of mathematics at the University of Stockholm.

We have seen that Alexander's first reforms roused society, and women in particular, to a desire for education. Events connected with the emancipation of the serfs also had a great influence on the development of women, awakening them to a sense of freedom and causing them to feel a need of it in their own lives. Maria N. Bernadskaya, a prominent woman, gifted with a sharp and sober intellect, wrote a forceful, thought-provoking, shrewd criticism of the educated women of her time and of their attitude towards themselves. Bernadskaya collaborated with her husband, a well-known scientist, and publisher of the first economic magazine in Russia, in an issue of which her article on women was published.

Bernadskaya entreated women to work. She considered work not only an obligatory contribution to society, but also a powerful developer of character. She believed that only a person who earned his living had the right to feel himself free. She wished to see women liberated from their slavery to the past. Dismayed that they did not even do such work as was open to them, including trade, farming, literature, art, science, and various handicrafts, she concluded that they simply did not want to work, that they were ashamed to work, considered it a disgrace to have to work, and were not in the least ashamed to live at the expense of their men-folk.

Bernadskaya only voiced what many women of her time felt. The changes which swept over Russia after the Crimean War had inspired them with new energy, with the necessity of taking an active part in life and courageously asserting their demands. But their aspirations ran in a vicious circle. They wasted strength and energy in seeking work, in discussing unimportant details or arguing about ideals. Nevertheless, their tenacity in fighting for the right to work grew with each year. The government became alarmed and tried to pacify the more turbulent elements by granting small concessions. Women were admitted into the governmental telegraph service in 1864, first in Finland, and later

in Russia proper. The requirements for admission were the same for women as for men, but the women received only $17.50 a month and had no privileges, such as a pension, because they were regarded as workers on a voluntary agreement which did not entitle them to any security. The women endured all this, some because they needed to work for their living, others because they believed in their ideals and hoped in the end to attain something and open a way for their successors.

To concentrate their scattered forces women tried to organize in groups. In this the provinces took the lead. In Vologda, in 1859, a group of women met in the Hall of the Nobility. Those who paid a fee of $2.50 per year were admitted as members of a sort of club. They chose the five most cultured among themselves and charged them to keep order and see that the rules were observed. One of these rules was that every woman should come to the meeting in a simple dress. The idea of organizing such group meetings or clubs met with wide response, and several clubs were organized in various cities. Their duration was short, however, as the reactionary government could not allow such a manifestation of feminine independence.

In 1861, in St. Petersburg, a group of which most of the members were women organized a charitable society of "Cheap Lodging" for the benefit of the

poor of the city. In connection with this there was eventually established a woman's labor bureau on a guild basis. The moving spirits of the group were three women of good family, who had been educated at home, and had of their own accord come to realize the need of social improvements: Maria V. Trubnikova, Nadejhda V. Stasova, and Anna P. Filosofova.

Maria V. Trubnikova, the daughter of the Decembrist V. P. Ivashev, was born in Siberia, and after her father's death was brought up in the house of her aunt, Princess Khovanskaya, where she studied together with her cousins under the direction of a highly educated German professor from Heidelberg. Reading was her passion, which she was able to gratify, as her aunt had a good library containing the best original and translated works of the time. In 1855 Maria married Trubnikov and moved to St. Petersburg, where she continued her education by reading serious books. Young, clever, well-educated, full of fire and enthusiasm, Trubnikova profoundly impressed everyone she met. It was natural, therefore, that as soon as she appeared in St. Petersburg she was surrounded by young men and women of advanced views and irresistible activity, striving for progress in all its forms and imbued with a desire to better the position of women. The women who rallied around Trubni-

kova were seeking objects upon which to concentrate their abilities which they were now recognizing for the first time.

Trubnikova was a born leader whose bright intellect blended with a stubborn and concentrated will; she knew how to win people over to her ideals, how to bring them together and awake in them the desire to work and to be of use. Her sincerity, honesty, breadth of outlook, and conviction—joined to her modesty, tact, and respect for the opinions and individualities of others—won all hearts, and impressed those who knew her with her inward strength and magnanimity. It was in her house that her two principal collaborators, Stasova and Filosofova, met and became intimate.

Nadejhda V. Stasova was the daughter of the court architect. She was born in 1822, of a highly cultured family. There were many books in the house, and the children began early to be interested in art. But, according to the custom of that time, the girls received a much more superficial education than the boys. The pleasures of an ordinary social career lasted for a few years, but the sisters Stasovy tired of them and devoted their time to earnest reading and discussions. Nadejhda had an unfortunate love affair; her fiancé deserted her and married another girl. All hopes for a personal happiness gone, she gave unreservedly of her ener-

gies and affections to the poor and the suffering, and when in 1858 her sister died she consecrated her life entirely to helping others.

The third member of this trio was Anna P. Filosofova.* She was born in 1837 and at the age of eighteen married Filosofov, with whom she lived happily for forty years. The first five years of her married life were spent in the whirl of society; but she was not satisfied. The young generation of Russia was rejoicing over the emancipation of the serfs and loudly expressed its delight. So did the young Filosofova, who was straightforward and sincere, if hot-headed. The superficial education she had received at home did not prepare her for self-education. She was beautiful, rich, young, and charming, and she was gifted with an extraordinarily acute sensitiveness and responded quickly to everything good or kind. She was immediately won over by Trubnikova and warmly accepted her group's humanitarian ideas. Her wide connections in bureaucratic circles because of her husband's position were of great service to the work of the group; she helped to overcome the obstacles to which every good undertaking in Russia had to be subjected. In the group Trubnikova took the initia-

* In 1913, a year after her death, her friends published a complete biography of Filosofova, dedicated to her memory, from which this information has been taken.

tive, originated the ideas, and Filosofova was the executive who carried them into effect.

For twenty years Filosofova and her colleagues worked incessantly, and during that time not only cheap rooms and flats were established, but also workshops, schools, and soup-kitchens. In helping the poor, in transforming the personal charity of rich women into an organized support, they saw how unprepared women were for the struggle of life and how much less prepared to fight for freedom and equality with men. Yet the woman's movement of the 'sixties was of a more general and original character than that of the 'forties, and was more widely spread among all classes of people. For the first time women began to form those small nuclei, working in cooperation, which are necessary to any social movement. Still it was not particularly a woman's movement, but only an intense desire for a share in the new life. The progress of women was not cordially received. The turbulent, youthful nihilism of the young generation, eager to forsake the old order of things quickly and irrevocably, repelled the more conservative elements of society.

The word "nihilism" has been so often misused that it is interesting to quote what Prince P. Kropotkin says of this movement:

". . . only a vigorous social movement which would attack the very roots of the evil, could reform the habits and customs of every-day life; and in Russia this movement,—this revolt of the individual,—took a far more powerful character, and became far more sweeping in its criticisms, than anywhere in Western Europe or America. 'Nihilism' was the name that Turgenev gave it in his epoch-making novel, *Fathers and Sons.* First of all, the nihilist declared war upon what may be described as 'the conventional lies of civilized mankind.' Absolute sincerity was his distinctive feature, and in the name of this sincerity he gave up, and asked others to give up, those superstitions, prejudices, customs and habits which their own reason could not justify. He refused to bend before any authority except that of reason, and in the analysis of every social institution or habit he revolted against any sort of more or less masked sophism. Marriage without love, and familiarity without friendship were equally repudiated. The nihilist girl, compelled by her parents to marry for property's sake, preferred to abandon her house and silk dresses. She put on a black woolen dress of the plainest description, cut off her hair, and went to a high school, in order to win there her personal independence. The nihilist carried his love of sincerity even into the minutest details of every-day life. He discarded the conventional forms of society talk, and expressed his opinions in a blunt and terse way, even with a certain affectation of outward roughness."

The negative attitude of society and of the government towards the efforts of women for higher education provoked in some progressive women a hatred of everything feminine: they paid no attention to their dress, cut their hair short, wore spectacles, adopted angular manners, and pretended to be cynical. This type of emancipated woman excited the censure of even the progressive press. Criticism from their own adherents in turn embittered these young persons, with the result that both parties, the progressive and the conservative, brought into the struggle much passion and injustice.

It was clear to women of the type of Trubnikova and her colleagues that, without the ability to earn her living, the intellectual Russian woman would continue in the vicious circle of inactivity and helplessness. All this prompted the group of Trubnikova, Stasova, and Filosofova to try to help the women in finding them work and also in standardizing wages, first by organizing the labor bureau, already mentioned, and later by establishing societies of women translators, printers, bookbinders, and so on; but above all fighting with all their might for a higher education.

The Russian government viewed with increasing displeasure and distrust the growing self-consciousness and initiative of the intellectual class. The

first attempt on the life of Alexander II in 1866 served as an excuse of abandoning any pretense at progress, and education was the first subject to be attacked. Women were persecuted for their desire to study or teach, and any who pursued such desires was suspect in the eyes of the State Police. But this did not diminish the zeal of those who were in earnest. A talented young woman publicist, Yevgenia I. Konradi, became the spokesman of the oppressed in a memorandum she published on the need of education. She had always fought against the passive dependence of women and argued that if they were to be efficient mothers and educators of succeeding generations they could not afford to continue in ignorance and incompetency.

Konradi's memorandum brought women together more closely; they realized that their strength lay in unity. In 1868, on the instigation of Trubnikova's group, a petition was presented to the President of the University of St. Petersburg asking for the organization of a series of lectures or courses for women. There were 400 women's signatures to the petition.

The commission appointed by the administration of the university to examine this petition fully approved of the idea of establishing special courses for women, but the university stated that it was unable to undertake the task because of lack of

means and facilities. The women were not disconcerted by this. They obtained the consent of the professors to give free lectures. Their next step was to secure the permission of the Minister of Education, well known to be a reactionary. Three women were delegated to see him, accompanied by one of the professors. The Minister, Count D. A. Tolstoy, did not surrender easily, arguing that the idea of courses for women was simply a whim, that women did not need higher education, because woman's purpose in life is marriage. In the end, however, he granted permission to organize public lectures to be read by professors of the university. The wife of the Minister of War, Milutine, obtained her husband's consent to have the lectures given in one of the auditoriums of the Medical Academy. The women of Moscow followed this example, organized in groups, and succeeded in opening courses for women in the fall of the same year (1868).

In 1872 medical courses for women were opened in St. Petersburg. Milutina, the wife of the Minister of War, and Tarnovskaya, the daughter of the President of the Military Academy, took an active part in the organization of these courses. Tarnovskaya was one of the most efficient members of the Trubnikova group, a cultured and broadminded woman. Lydia Rodstvennaya, the young daughter

of a colonel, who had come to St. Petersburg from Siberia to study, endowed these courses with the sum of $25,000.

No matter what difficulties lay before them, the Russian women of the 'sixties marched irresistibly forward. They had been admitted to higher education for only a short time; nevertheless they missed no opportunity of proving themselves capable in medicine, law, history, and other sciences. Volkova and Lermontova distinguished themselves in chemistry, the latter became doctor of chemistry in the University of Göttingen; Sophia Kovalevskaya, in pure mathematics; Alexandra Efimenko, in ethnology; Sophia Pereyeslavzeva, in zoology; Sophia Brullova, in history; Kozmina, in law; and before 1880 Litvinova had received the degree of doctor of mathematics, and Evreyinova and Kauffman that of doctor of laws in foreign countries.

The little they were able to extract from the reactionary government could not satisfy the Russian women's hunger for knowledge. The number of those who went abroad to study grew with every year. In foreign countries they became interested in socialistic ideas which they brought back to Russia. The government was so alarmed by this that in May, 1873, it ordered all Russian students abroad to return to Russia before a certain date. As a recompense for this act the government prom-

ised not to oppose higher education for women in Russia.

It is interesting to note that some Russians went as far as the United States in their search for education. When, in 1873, the International Woman's League was organized in New York, two of its five founders, Maria Goncharova and Maria Andreyeva, were Russians. The secretary, Catherine Gardner, was also a Russian, who on a visit to Russia early in 1874 was charged by the League to enter into relations with progressive women there and, if possible, to try to organize a branch of the League. She sought access to the Crown Princess, but failed to gain it. She made the acquaintance of Trubnikova and her group, and was very much interested in their activities. At this time Filosofova was the most prominent member of the group, taking a lively part in the women's courses, organizing lectures and readings in her own home, concerts and charity bazaars, and collecting large sums of money during the famine of 1873-74 to send doctors and nurses to the starving population. On her return to the States, Catherine Gardner told of this work and Filosofova was elected an honorary member of the League.

In summing up the activities of the women of the 'sixties we are struck by their invincible energy and exuberant faith. When the government forbade

women admittance to universities, they endeavored to open universities of their own. When this attempt failed, they started private courses and lectures. They took advantage of every opportunity to gain knowledge. They made scientific excursions, studied in laboratories, induced professors to treat more extensively the subjects upon which they lectured, insisted upon the necessity of studying methods of education, and opened pedagogical courses in spite of the opposition of the reactionary government. Finally, after the recall of Russian students from abroad, they succeeded in securing the government's permission to open women's colleges.

CHAPTER X

AROUSED by the emancipation of the serfs, simultaneously with the great longing for knowledge, there grew in the hearts of Russia's youth an intense desire to be of use, to help the poorer classes, to pay off the debts of forefathers, to atone for the sins of generations of serfholders. The young people of Russia maintained that, having enjoyed a cultured life at the expense of the masses, it was now their duty to go among them and do all they could for them in return. Thus originated the "V Narod" movement, the movement "to the people." This movement first came to the attention of society when it became known that Karakozov—who had made an attempt on the life of Alexander II in 1866—and his friends were living three or four in a room and spending all their money in starting cooperative workshops and associations among the people, in which organizations they took an active part.

Kropotkin tells us that "five years later thousands and thousands of Russian youths were doing the same." In the preceding years (1860-1865) there had been bitter struggles in almost every

wealthy family between the fathers, who wanted to maintain the old traditions, and sons and daughters who defended their right to live according to their own ideals. Girls bred in the most aristocratic families rushed penniless to the capitals, eager to learn some profession which would free them from the domestic yoke and eventually from the marriage yoke. They had won personal freedom; and now they wanted to utilize that freedom, not for their own enjoyment, but for carrying to the people the knowledge by which they themselves had been emancipated.

In every district of St. Petersburg, in every town of Russia, small groups formed for self-improvement and self-education. The aim of all reading and discussion was to solve the great question how to be useful to the masses. An answer was gradually evolved in the idea of settling amongst the people and living their life. Girls passed teacher's examinations, learned midwifery or nursing, and went by hundreds to the villages, where they devoted themselves entirely to the poorest part of the population.

There was no ideal of social reconstruction in their minds, nor any thought of revolution. They simply wanted to bring knowledge to the mass of peasants, to teach them to read, to give them medi-

cal assistance, and to help them out of their darkness and misery. Also, to learn from them what might be their ideals of a better social life. This movement advanced openly, but the government, fearing the menace that any progress would mean to its power, branded it as revolutionary. Numerous arrests were made and many hundreds of young people were imprisoned or deported. Most of them naturally became revolutionists, for they had brought from abroad the seeds of revolution which until then had been latent. The peasants, moreover, were suspicious of the *Narodniki,* as these young people were called, who, in order to gain the confidence of the masses, went about in peasant garb, living as the people lived, but who could not conceal the poor fit of these borrowed garments or the smooth hands of persons unaccustomed to hard work. Had the *Narodniki* been less dreamy in their idealism they would have foreseen that the peasants, oppressed and cheated, could not understand anyone working for altruistic motives, and of the two evils confronting them—the régime which they knew, and the *Narodniki* of whom they knew nothing—would support the former. The peasants, indeed, materially contributed to the failure of the movement by handing over many of the *Narodniki* to the police.

The government only made revolutionaries by its method of repression, for persecution spurred the *Narodniki* to redoubled efforts. The government threw the whole blame for the revolutionary movement on the women. The report presented in 1874 by the Minister of Justice, Count Pahlen, to the Emperor showed that the success of revolutionary propaganda was due to the presence of a great number of women among the revolutionaries. These young women and girls helped to cover the greater part of Russia with a network of revolutionary societies. Of the 23 centers for propaganda, six were headed by women. Pahlen also noted with horror how frequently revolutionary ideas gained ground in families which were considered the bulwarks of the autocracy. The wife of a colonel of Gendarmerie in Orenburg not only did not dissuade her son from participating in revolutionary work, but actually helped him with advice and information. A middle-aged woman, a rich landowner, did propaganda work herself and also persuaded her ward to help her, and sent her daughters abroad to study. Daughters of high officials—continued Pahlen in his enumeration of the crimes of Russian women—went to the people, worked daily in the fields like peasants, and slept in peasant houses. And their relatives, instead of rebuking them, sympathized

with them. Pahlen's report also showed that in 37 provinces 770 persons were arrested within two or three months, 158 of the number being women.

Two large street demonstrations took place for the first time in St. Petersburg in 1876. The first, on March 17, passed off with impunity, but the second, on December 20, was followed by many arrests. In the middle of January, twenty of the participants were judged, of whom six were sentenced to hard labor. Among these was a girl of sixteen years, Sheftel, whose sentence was afterwards mitigated to deportation to the province of Tobolsk.

The severe chastisement of this small group of young people made a painful impression and was still vivid in people's minds when the trial of the *Narodniki,* known as the "Trial of the Fifty," began. They were tried on general principles for their work among the masses. Fifteen of their number were women, of whom the oldest was twenty-five and the youngest eighteen. These women were proud to be brought to trial and to share the fate of the men with whom they had taken part in the movement. The trial gave the *Narodniki* an opportunity through their speeches and general attitude to reveal their undaunted idealism. Russian hearts went out to the women

especially—heroic apostles of self-sacrifice and love whose elevating influence affected the whole attitude of society toward women.

It was a woman, Sophia I. Bardina, who stated the *profession de foi* of the *Narodniki:*

"I belong, gentlemen, to the class of those who are known among the young people as peaceful propagandists. Their task is to infuse into the consciousness of the people ideals of the most perfect and just social order, or to clarify for them ideals which are unconsciously rooted in them; to point out to them the defects of the present order, so that errors may be avoided in the future; but when that future will come, we do not state, and we cannot state, since its ultimate realization does not depend upon us. I think that there is quite a distance from such a propaganda to incitement to riot. . . . We are accused of being political revolutionists; but if we had aspired to a political *coup d'état* we should have acted differently; we should not have gone to the people whom it is necessary to prepare and develop, but we should have sought to bring together the dissatisfied elements among the educated classes. . . . But the truth of the matter is that we have in no way aspired to a *coup d'état*. . . . I have never denied the right of private property; on the contrary I even had the boldness to presume that I am defending private property, as I acknowledge that every person has a right to that property which has been procured by his own productive labor and that every person must be the master

of his labor and of its products. . . . Nor do I know whether the family is undermined by that social order which forces a woman to leave her family and turn to the factory where she and her children are inevitably corrupted, that order which compels a woman to become a prostitute, because of her poverty, and which even sanctions prostitution as a legitimate and necessary phenomenon in every well-ordered state; or whether the family is undermined by us who are striving to eradicate this misery, which is the principal cause of all social calamities, including the destruction of the family. . . . In reference to religion, I can only say that I have always been true to its spirit and its essential principles in that pure form which had been preached by the founder of Christianity. . . . No more am I guilty of attempting to undermine the government, as I think that the efforts of single individuals to uproot the government are bound to fail. I am accused of instigating to revolt. But I have never incited the people to revolt, as I believe that a revolution can only be the result of a series of historical conditions and not of individual instigation. . . . Persecute us," she concluded, "so long as material strength is behind you, gentlemen; but behind us is the moral strength, the strength of evolution, the strength of ideas, and ideas, alas! cannot be caught on bayonets!"

There is almost no biographical information concerning Bardina. She was arrested in 1875, and was tried in 1877 when she was twenty-two years

old; sentenced to ten years of hard labor which was commuted to deportation for life to the province of Tobolsk, Siberia. She escaped thence in December, 1880, and spent the rest of that winter in Kazan, ill with consumption. In the summer of 1881 she went abroad. The depressing conditions of emigrant life, and especially the impossibility of returning to the work she loved so much, prompted her to commit suicide by shooting herself in 1883.

Another important trial of *Narodniki*, known as the "Trial of the Hundred and Ninety-Three," took place at the end of 1877. Several women were implicated in this trial also, two of whom were especially prominent: Sophia Perovskaya and Catherine Breshko-Breshkovskaya, the "Grandmother of the Russian Revolution."

Catherine Breshkovskaya was born in 1844 in the province of Vitebsk. Her parents were kind, cultured people, and their home life was rarely disturbed by uncontrolled moods or hasty words. In her reminiscences, "The little Grandmother of the Russian Revolution," Breshkovskaya says that in her childhood she was always distressed about her innumerable "sins." She loved solitude. Like her father, she had a passion for scrutinizing things and meditating upon them. She would run off into the

meadows and watch the cows grazing; she would go to the huts of the serfs, mingling with the peasant children and their mothers, studying their life and their problems.

From earliest childhood she was vividly impressed by the contrast between the condition of her father's serfs and that of her own family. "I saw," she says, "that my father, good though he was, put much more heart into looking after his own interests than those of his serfs, and I was shocked at the inequality between the rich and the poor. From the age of eight, how to find justice was the question that troubled me." Her dream was to help the peasants and to make them happy. She had heard of America, and of how Columbus and his companions went there in search of gold and found treasure in abundance; and she planned to go to California and there heap up fortunes to bring back with her for the serfs.

At nineteen she went with her mother to St. Petersburg and joined the central group of *Narodniki,* men and women of noble birth and university training. Her mother fell ill and had to return home. Breshkovskaya remained in the capital. She longed for independence, and felt it to be her duty to earn her living; so she compromised with her family and entered a nobleman's household as

governess to his children. She held this position for two years and a half, but her father finally insisted upon her returning home.

He helped her open a boarding school for girls; he also built her a cottage where she taught the peasant children free. At the age of twenty-five she married a liberal, broadminded young nobleman, who helped her in her good work. They established a cooperative bank and a peasants' agricultural school, and, together with a small group of friends, made vigorous effort to secure better treatment of the peasants through political action. Catherine says: "It is a poor patriot that will not thoroughly try his government before he rises against it. We searched the laws and edicts; we found certain scant and long-neglected peasants' rights of local suffrage; and then we began showing the peasants how to use these rights that they already had." As a result of this some of her friends were deported to Siberia, and it was bluntly intimated to Catherine's father that the less he and his household meddled with the affairs of the peasants, the better it would be for them and for the peasants too.

This experience convinced Catherine that under the existing form of government no serious improvement could be brought about. Any attempt to overthrow the autocracy meant imprisonment, torture, exile or even death. Catherine was then

twenty-six years old. Her husband, like herself, had his whole life before him. She asked him if he would be ready to expose himself to the tremendous risks of work in the revolutionary movement. He replied that he was not. "I am," she said, and she went on without him. She went to Kiev, where she joined a revolutionary group. The movement "to the people" was at its height in Kiev. When her son was born, Catherine arranged to leave him with her brother and his wife, who promised to care for him as if he were their own. The parting from the child was very painful. "My heart was torn into a thousand pieces. . . . The conflict between my love for the child and my love for the freedom of Russia robbed me of many a night's sleep. I knew that I could not be a mother and still be a revolutionist. Either the one or the other must absorb one's whole being, one's entire devotion. . . . I was not the only one called upon to make such a sacrifice. Among the women in the struggle for Russian freedom there were many who chose to be fighters for justice rather than mothers of the victims of tyranny."

Catherine now, in 1874, set out to make revolutionary propaganda among the peasants. For a few months she traveled about, first making friends with the people and then distributing her literature. She had many talks with peasants and laborers, and

with her sympathetic and motherly way she soon learned to win their hearts, so that they were as wax in her hands. But one day she was arrested and held in prison in St. Petersburg for a long time.

"In 1878 we were tried," she says, describing the subsequent trial. "Out of the three hundred imprisoned more than one hundred had died or gone insane. We one hundred and ninety-three survivors were packed into a little hall. We nerved each other to refuse to be tried, for the trial, we knew, was to be a farce, with a special jury of only seven, of whom but one was a peasant, and with judges appointed by the Czar. They divided us into groups of ten or fifteen. The trials lasted half a year. When my turn came, I protested against the farce. I said to the judges: 'I have the honor to belong to the Russian socialistic and revolutionary party, and consequently do not recognize the authority of the Czar's courts over me.' For this I was at once taken out and my prison term was lengthened to five years as a hard labor convict in the mines. This was the punishment given to a murderer. I was the first woman to be sentenced to the mines as a political offender. My term served, I was to be an exile in Siberia for some years longer."

On reaching the mines of Kara she found that the political convicts were not required to take part in the actual hard labor of the mines. After spending ten months in Kara, Breshkovskaya was taken to a bleak little group of huts near the Arctic Circle. For two years she planned to escape, searching for a guide to lead her and her companions to the Pacific. But when the attempt was made they were caught, and she was sentenced to four years at Kara and forty blows of the lash. The flogging was not carried out.

At Kara, Breshkovskaya found seventeen women political prisoners with whom she was to live in four low cells. A few days after her arrival eight men politicals escaped, leaving dummies in their place. They were all recaptured, but for their escape all the politicals were punished. "One morning," says Breshkovskaya, "the Cossack guards entered our cells, seized us, tore off our clothes, and dressed us in convict suits alive with vermin. One of us attempted suicide. Taken to an old prison we were thrown into the 'black hole'—the foul stalls off a low grimy hall which contained two big stoves and two little windows. Each of us had a stall six feet by five. For three years we never breathed the outside air. We struggled constantly against the outrages inflicted on us.

After one outrage we lay like a row of dead women, without touching food, until certain promises were finally extracted from the warden."

From Kara, Catherine was taken to a small hamlet on the border of China. There she spent eight years, having no one to talk to but the native Buriats. In September, 1896, her term expired and she returned to Russia, having spent twenty-three years in Siberia. She resumed almost immediately the work of organizing the peasants. For several years she traveled openly, under her own name, although she did her organizing in secret; but finally, finding herself suspect, she disguised herself as a peasant and thus kept on with her work for some years more. The government made every effort to catch her, but without success. She had many hairbreadth escapes, but she never thought of giving up. In 1904 she visited the United States to enlist help for the cause. The Revolution of 1905 brought her back to Russia, hoping for a general uprising of the masses, which, however, did not materialize. Through the treachery of Azeff, an *agent provocateur*, Breshkovskaya was again arrested in 1908. She was kept for a long time in the fortress of Peter and Paul in St. Petersburg, and afterward exiled to Siberia, where she remained until the Revolution of March, 1917.

The other prominent woman implicated in the "Trial of the One Hundred and Ninety-Three" was Sophia Perovskaya. She was born in 1854 of an aristocratic family. The Perovsky were descended from a younger branch of the family of Prince Razumovsky, the morganatic husband of the Empress Elizabeth. Sophia's grandfather, Leon Perovsky, had been Minister of Interior, her father, Governor-General of St. Petersburg, while her uncle, Count Vassily Perovsky, had conquered several provinces in Asia for Nikolai I.

Sophia's childhood was a sad one, as her father was a wilful despot such as the patriarchal system alone could have produced, and her mother, constantly humiliated and insulted, remained at home only to protect the children. Thus, in her own family Perovskaya learned to hate oppression and developed her love for the oppressed and weak. For her mother, one of the downtrodden, she had a love bordering upon adoration. In her later career she never forgot to write to her mother, often stopped in her work to send her a package of sweets, and risked her life in order to see her.

In *The Birth of the Russian Democracy*, A. J. Sack says: "The education of Sophia Perovskaya as a child was very neglected. She was not taught to read until she was eight years old, and at fourteen her education was considered completed.

However, somehow she became interested in serious books. When her family moved to St. Petersburg, she entered a high school. Here she become acquainted with several girls who were interested in the radical movement. When her father objected to these friendships, she left home. She was only sixteen at that time."

When Perovskaya was fifteen the movement for the emancipation of women was in full swing. Like all women of her generation, she had a longing for knowledge and began to read and study. The literature of the time severely criticized the existing order and indicated socialism as the sole remedy. Under the guidance of writers such as Cherneshevsky and Dobrolyubov, the longing for knowledge which burned in the hearts of Russian young men and women was transformed into a longing for activity; and the common character of their interests thus drew the younger generation together in warm friendship. Her flight, in depriving Sophia of home life, brought her closer to her friends, and especially to the sisters Kornilovy, with whom she founded a circle for self-education. Two years later this group became known as the "Circle of Tchaykovsky."

"We used to meet," says Prince Kropotkin, who belonged to the circle, "in a suburban part of St. Petersburg, in a small house of which Sophia

Perovskaya, under the assumed name and the fabricated passport of an artisan's wife, was the supposed tenant. . . . Now, in the capacity of an artisan's wife, in her cotton dress and men's boots, her head covered with a cotton kerchief, as she carried on her shoulders her two pails of water from the Neva, no one would have recognized in her the girl who a few years before shone in one of the most fashionable drawing-rooms of the capital. She was a general favorite, and every one of us entering the house, had a specially friendly smile for her—even when she, making it a point of honor to keep the house relatively clean, quarreled with us about the dirt which we, dressed in peasant top-boots and sheepskins, brought in, after walking the muddy streets of the suburbs. She tried then to give to her girlish, innocent, and very intelligent little face the most severe expression possible. In her moral conceptions she was a 'rigorist,' but not in the least of the sermon-preaching type. When she was dissatisfied with some one's conduct, she would cast a severe glance at him from beneath her brows; but in that glance one saw her open-minded, generous nature, which understood all that is human. On one point only she was inexorable. 'A woman's man,' she said once speaking of some one, and the expression and the manner in which she said it, without interrupt-

ing her work, are engraved forever in my memory. . . . Perovskaya was a 'popularist' to the very bottom of her heart, and at the same time a revolutionist, a fighter of the truest steel. She had no need to embellish the workers and the peasants with imaginary virtues, in order to love them and work for them. She took them as they were, and said to me once: 'We have begun a great thing. Two generations, perhaps, will succumb in the task, and yet it must be done!' None of the women of our circle would have given way before the certainty of death on the scaffold. Each would have looked death straight in the face. . . ."

Perovskaya spent four years in the circle where the severe, almost monastic atmosphere was softened by the fire of enthusiasm and the glow of self-sacrifice; where any weakness or manifestation of egotism showing insufficient devotion to the cause would be noticed and reproved, but always gently so that the desired correction was achieved. This atmosphere undoubtedly influenced the formation of Perovskaya's character. Her most prominent traits were a stoical severity toward herself, an invincible energy, and a bright intellect. She was always seeking new ways and new methods in order to enlarge the circle of her own and her companions' activities. This made her the most active initiator of all the groups to which she be-

longed. Her influence was particularly beneficial since she possessed a strong critical faculty, so that her energy was not merely inspired by a fiery imagination.

In 1873 Perovskaya was arrested with a group of workingmen among whom she was spreading revolutionary doctrines. She was imprisoned in the fortress of Peter and Paul, but for want of evidence she was liberated on her father's bail. She then went with her mother to an estate they had in the Crimea. Three years Sophia waited for the trial, fearing to do any revolutionary work lest she commit the others who, like her, were liberated on bail. But she did not waste her time. She took a course in nursing, for which she displayed a great capacity, being possessed of much gentleness and patience. At last, in 1877, began the "Trial of the One Hundred and Ninety-Three" in which almost all the members of the "Circle of Tchaykovsky" were implicated. Perovskaya was acquitted. Having little faith in Russian police methods, she found it best to disappear and from that time on she lived in hiding.

For a little over a year Perovskaya directed all her activities towards the liberation of those of her comrades who had been sentenced to the Central Prison. But all attempts failed, and Perovskaya, who, relying on her own acquittal, had gone to

visit her mother, was arrested and deported to the province of Simbirsk in the company of two guards. She planned to escape without help, without even telling her comrades of her arrest. Her guards took all possible precautions, sleeping in the same room with her, one near the door, the other near the window; but once it chanced that the door of the room in which she was to sleep opened not into the room but out of the room—which the guards did not notice—and when the guards were fast asleep and snoring, Perovskaya quietly stepped over the body of the man sleeping near the door, reached the street and walked to the station, where she took the first train. She did not buy a ticket, but, impersonating a stupid peasant woman, as was her wont, paid her fare to the conductor and proceeded unmolested.

In 1878 she came to St. Petersburg and took an active part in the revolutionary movement, going wherever the danger was thickest. In 1879 she participated in the unsuccessful attempt to blow up the Imperial train. It was she who, on March 1, 1881, gave the signal to throw the bomb by which Alexander II was killed. Only a general plan had been laid for this attempt, and Perovskaya was to work the details according to her own judgment. It is characteristic of her that when the news came that the Czar had taken an-

other route from that by which he was expected to go to the Winter Palace, she so quickly and decisively switched her arrangements about that the success of the attempt was in no way impaired. Perovskaya was arrested a week later, simply because she had refused to disappear. Quiet, modest, serious, without a trace of pose or fear, she won the respect of her judges. Her only request was that she should share the fate of her companions, and this was granted: she was hanged on the 16th of April 1881, at the age of twenty-six. A few hours before the execution she wrote to her mother bidding her not to grieve, that her fate was not so sad after all, but was what she had expected sooner or later; that she had lived according to her convictions and was facing the end with a clear conscience.

In the second half of the 'seventies, revolutionist trials followed each other in quick succession, arousing indignation against the injustice and despotism of the government. The *Narodniki* lost faith in the peaceful methods of propaganda and became not only revolutionists, but even terrorists. The severity of their punishment; the cruelty of the prisons; the persecutions they met at every step, together with the slow progress of the propaganda in face of the utter ignorance of the masses —prompted them to change their tactics. The un-

fortunate war with Turkey in 1877-1878, which laid bare the embezzlements, blunders and dishonesty of the government, showed the revolutionists that their time had come. The first political assassinations corresponded so well with the general mood that they were accepted almost with cheers. The trial of Vera Zasulich can be cited as an example of such an attitude.

Vera Zasulich might never have been a revolutionist had she not happened, when seventeen and just out of a boarding school, to meet Nechaiev, a revolutionary who had tried to organize a revolution in 1869, but had been caught and imprisoned. This acquaintance meant for Vera two years of prison without ever knowing what her crime had been, and after prison, exile to a distant province.

Zasulich had a big heart and ready sympathies, common traits of all Russian revolutionary women. In 1878 she heard that Trepov, the Chief of St. Petersburg police, had ordered one of the political prisoners flogged because he did not remove his hat when the chief of police entered his cell. She did not know the prisoner personally, but felt that it was somebody's duty to avenge him. So she took a revolver and, under the pretext of presenting a petition, shot and wounded Trepov. Vera declared at her trial that she had done everything to bring this affair to the knowledge of the

public, and only when she failed had resorted to violence. The jury acquitted her unanimously, the public stood in crowds at the District Court to cheer her, and when the police tried to rearrest her on her way out of the court, the crowd saved her. For some time she hid in St. Petersburg and money was openly raised to help her. Then she went abroad and became very active in revolutionary work. She returned to Russia after the Revolution of 1917, and died in the summer of 1921, exhausted by her many privations.

The shot fired by Vera Zasulich marked the beginning of armed hostilities on the part of the revolutionists. In the terroristic acts they often were prompted by self-defense and revenge because of the cruelty, injustice, and violence of governmental repression. Hard labor and deportation to Siberia for life were often inflicted for small offenses. Butovskaya was sentenced to hard labor for handing to a worker a pamphlet which had been printed abroad. Gukovskaya, a girl of fourteen, was deported for life to Siberia because she participated in an armed demonstration in Odessa in 1878. She hanged herself in the prison in 1881. Maria Kovalevskaya was arrested in 1879 for armed resistance. She had joined a group of revolutionists in Kiev, and was among those who fired upon the police when they

unexpectedly came to the house in 1879. She was sentenced to ten years of hard labor and sent to Kara. The suffering and the continual struggle against the violence and insults of the prison authorities drove her insane in 1880. During her illness she was cruelly beaten, and though she recovered, she was kept at Kara.

All over Russia women were active, and all over Russia they were arrested for their efforts to educate the masses. Elizabeth Kovalskaya, having passed a teacher's examination, organized in 1868 in her home in Kharkov special courses in history and political economy for workingwomen, of whom about fifty attended regularly. She also opened an evening school for illiterate women and a small library, but the continual searches by the police made it impossible to continue her work. She tried to secure permission from the Minister of Education, Dimitri Tolstoy, for women to attend the University of Kharkov, but was severely rebuked. Then she went abroad and joined the revolutionists. On her return to Russia she entered the governmental service as a teacher and carried on her revolutionary work, but she was soon asked to resign. She was arrested in 1881 and sentenced to hard labor for life. In 1882 she escaped from the Irkutsk prison, but was caught and sent to Kara. There she suffered unspeakable

privations and insults. The prison authorities considered her a dangerous rebel, and often placed her in solitary confinement. When, in 1889, the Governor-General of Siberia, Baron Korf, visited Kara, Kovalskaya remained seated in his presence and replied insolently when addressed. Two weeks later the order came to transport her to another prison and keep her in strict confinement. Kovalskaya refused to go. But in the night the guards entered her cell, dragged her from her bed, insulting and beating her, dressed her and carried her away. What became of her later is not known, but it is supposed that she was tortured to death.

Siguida, her cell companion, who had been arrested in 1885 in Taganrog and sent to hard labor for working in a secret printing office of the revolutionists, could not bear quietly the insults inflicted on Kovalskaya. She slapped the director of the prison in the face. For this she was flogged, and she died from the shock and the shame of the punishment.

The horrors of prison life drove the political prisoners to hunger strikes, to assassinations, and frequently to suicide. Three women, Kovalevskaya, Kalujhnaya, and Smirnitskaya, committed suicide by taking opium immediately after Siguida was flogged. The impression produced on Russia by this tragedy was such that Alexander

III had to abolish corporal punishment for women.

During the war with Turkey many women revolutionists went as Red Cross nurses because they saw a way of serving the masses. But when the war was over they returned to their posts. Their untiring energy, their indomitable courage, and their unwavering moral strength gave new vigor to the hearts of the revolutionists during the hours of darkest reaction.

One more woman deserves particular mention, for her life is an extraordinary record of human inspiration and endurance. Vera N. Figner was born in 1853. Her childhood was a happy one, spent in a comfortable and cultured home. She graduated from school at seventeen, and at eighteen married a judge. At that time she just began to reflect upon the wretched condition of the masses, and what might be the duty of members of the privileged class towards them, and decided to become a physician in order to serve the people. Her husband opposed her and a divorce ensued. In 1872 Figner went to Zurich to study medicine, joining one of the first Russian revolutionist groups abroad. On her return she worked in a village as a doctor's assistant. From the beginning she was suspect, though nothing definite could be stated against her. The general conditions of Russian life made progress so difficult

that she finally became a member of the terroristic organization, the "Will of the People."

Now began a life tense and remarkable—full of romance and of untold dangers. For four years Vera Figner moved over the whole of Russia, always under a new assumed name, spreading the revolutionary doctrines, recruiting new members for the cause, organizing its forces, linking by her personal activity the remote elements of the revolutionary army. She was a matchless worker: her beauty, her brilliant mind, her moral strength and her sociable disposition won her friends in great numbers in all walks of life.

The Executive Committee of the "Will of the People," realizing her value, tried to safeguard her life, but she insisted on taking the risks that came her way. She took to Odessa the dynamite to blow up the Imperial train in which Alexander II was traveling in 1879. Back in St. Petersburg, Figner took active part in the preparations for the attempt of March 1, 1881, on Alexander's life. She spent the night before the deed in making bombs. The police, furious at their failure to prevent the assassination, used all means at their disposal to find the participants; but their efforts to discover the whereabouts of Figner were of no avail—she had successfully disappeared. When the police arrived at her last address they found her room

empty, but the water which she had boiled for her morning tea was still warm.

In 1883 Vera Figner was arrested through the treachery of a revolutionist who turned state's evidence, and was tried with many others. The death sentence was mitigated to hard labor for life, then changed to imprisonment for life in the fortress of Schlüsselburg, a hundred miles north of St. Petersburg. She entered the fortress at the age of thirty, spent twenty-two years in confinement, and was released during the Revolution of 1905.

When the activities of her life ceased she turned to writing. She wrote poetry which she published in 1905, and once again free she gave herself wholly to literature and won a place among the noted writers of Russia. While in the fortress she devoted herself to the alleviation of the prisoners' hardships. In all memoirs of the revolutionists of Schlüsselburg, Vera Figner's name is mentioned with loving respect.

The government redoubled its energy in pursuing the revolutionists, forced many of them to flee the country, and imprisoned almost all the rest. The revolutionary party of the "Will of the People" was reduced to a handful of men and women. Kropotkin tells us that a compromise was agreed upon between the government and what

remained of the revolutionaries by which the government promised that there should be no further executions of persons involved in the plots of Alexander II's reign, and that a commission should be nominated to review the cases of all those who had been exiled to Siberia without trial; and the Executive Committee of the "Will of the People" promised to make no attempts on the life of Alexander III until his coronation should be over. The agreement was kept on both sides and the revolutionists suspended hostilities. But the quiet that ensued was only the lull before the storm.

CHAPTER XI

AFTER the assassination of Alexander II and the accession of Alexander III, Russia seemed to fall into a torpor. The new Emperor was opposed to any constitutional reforms. A whole epoch of progressive work and bright hopes was to be blotted out utterly; the darkest period Russia was to know in the nineteenth century was at hand. The reforms of the 'sixties were regarded as mistakes, and absolutism once more rose to undo what they had accomplished. The government killed political thought in every branch, leaving the people nothing but their pleasures. Schools, universities, the press, the theatre, were stultified, and egotistical passions were openly fostered; the old patriarchal system made a last effort to reassert its domination over Russian life. Education suffered, and woman's education in particular. "The system of cultural absolutism," says Amfiteatrov, "proved too heavy on the shoulders of Russian monarchy and in 1887 Alexander III wrote his famous resolution 'Cease Education.' on the report of his Minister of Education."

But this "ceasing" had begun much earlier. In 1882 by order of the Minister of War the medical courses for women had been closed, to be reopened only in 1895 after countless difficulties. The woman's college which had been opened in 1878 existed until 1886, and only after the extensive efforts of the "old guard," the group of Trubnikova, were the courses reopened three years later, and with an abbreviated curriculum. Even such small success gladdened the hearts of women: for Russian life had relapsed into a seeking after gross pleasures and a servile seeking of power, because power led to the attainment of pleasures.

With the accession of Nikolai II (1894-1917) the Russian intellectual class showed new readiness to revolt. In the earlier history of Russia we have seen that a reactionary government always roused people to protest. So now the youth of Russia revolted as before. In 1899 students of the University of St. Petersburg, leaving the university after a meeting at which they had been demanding the liberty of free assemblage, were met at the doors by mounted Cossacks and flogged with *nagaikas*—long rubber whips. New disturbances resulted which were repressed with untold cruelty: students were flogged, drafted as soldiers, and expelled from the universities.

Meanwhile the revolutionists were slowly re-

organizing, rallying again into a strong force. In 1898 the Social Democratic Party was organized, in which Vera Zasulich took an active part, directing the work from abroad. Its aim was to protect the workingmen. About the same time the remnant of the party of the "Will of the People" reformed itself into the Social-Revolutionary Party with the aim of protecting the peasants. In 1901 a Fighting Organization was established by this party to carry out sentences pronounced by the Central Committee. The activities of the Fighting Organization began in 1902, after the assassination of the Minister of Interior. Repression continued: violence was met only with further repression. Women took an active part in the revolutionary work of both parties among workingmen and peasants and also among the soldiers and sailors.

Nothing stimulates public discontent more than an unsuccessful war; and in countries ruled by absolutism wars are plentiful, and in the majority of cases unsuccessful. The war of 1904-1905 with Japan brought into conflict the opposing forces in Russian life—the government and the apostles of freedom. In 1905 a revolution broke which achieved the establishment of the "Constitution" and the Duma; but Russia's ecstasy of freedom was brief. The government realized its

own force and the weakness of its adversary and renewed its persecutions with frenzy. Punitive expeditions were organized; hundreds of people were shot without trial; thousands were imprisoned or deported. The revolutionists responded with dooming to death the most cruel members of the government. Here the women stepped forward and many carried out these assassinations with the same self-abnegation and self-sacrifice which they had shown in earlier days.

In 1906 the struggle grew desperate. Alexandra Izmailovitch, a general's daughter, shot and wounded Kurlov, Governor of the province of Minsk, who had organized Jewish pogroms. She was arrested, insulted, tortured, and sentenced to death, but the sentence was mitigated to hard labor. Her sister Catherine was immediately shot without trial for attempting the life of Admiral Chukhnine, who was only slightly wounded. Bitzenko shot and killed general Sakharov, who had been sent by the government to the province of Saratov to suppress the agrarian movement. Her death sentence was mitigated to hard labor. Maria Shkolnik made an attempt on the life of Khvostov, Governor of the province of Chernigov, who cruelly persecuted the peasants for trying to find relief from their terrible situation. Zinaida Konoplianikova shot General Minn, head of a

punitive expedition, who was inundating the streets of Moscow with blood in the name of liberty. She was executed in August 1906 by hanging. Ragozinnikova killed Maximovsky, Director-General of Prisons, to avenge the horrors which the prisoners had to suffer. Mamaeva and Venedictova were executed for the intention to throw a bomb into the Kronstadt Military Court. Frumkina, Sevastianova, Rasputina, and others were arrested, imprisoned, tortured, and executed for participating in conspiracies against the government and for terroristic acts. Spiridonova killed Lougenovsky, Chief of the *Okhrana*—a special section of the police who dealt with the revolutionists—who tortured and flogged to death the peasants of the province of Tambov during the agrarian troubles in 1906. This is her own account of the affair from Sack's *The Birth of the Russian Democracy:*

"I entered the railroad car in which Lougenovsky was seated, and from a distance of twelve to thirteen feet I fired at him. . . . I covered my face with my hands, but with the butt-ends of their rifles they beat my hands away from my face. Then a Cossack officer, snatching hold of my braids, lifted me up by them, and with all his might threw me on the platform. . . . Then someone caught hold of my foot and dragged me down

the stairs, my head banging against each stair. I was hauled into a cab by my braids. . . . With his foot, the Cossack Zhdanov kicked me into the corner of the cell, where another Cossack officer, waiting for me, would trample me with his feet and hurl me back to Zhdanov, who jumped on my neck. . . . Then they stripped off my clothes, whipped me with knouts, swearing all the time, and constantly saying: 'Now, Miss, make a fiery speech!' With one of my eyes I could not see anything, and the right side of my face was terribly mauled. They pinched that cheek and asked maliciously: 'Does it hurt, dear? Say, tell us, who are your comrades?' . . . They tore my hair out one by one, meanwhile asking: 'Who are the other revolutionaries?' They extinguished lighted cigarettes against my body and shouted at me: 'Now, cry out, you ———!' . . . I testified as follows: 'Yes, I deliberately set out to kill Lougenovsky, in accordance with the decision of the Tambov Committee of the Party of Social-Revolutionists. Fully approving the sentence and fully conscious of the meaning of my act, I took upon myself the execution of the sentence.'" Maria Spiridonova was sentenced to ten years of hard labor. The Cossack Zhdanov and his companions were killed by decree of the Fighting Organization.

Women were also active outside of revolutionary work. Interest in the woman's question and woman's suffrage was reawakened by the World's Exhibition of Chicago in 1900, where a woman's department was organized and an international woman's congress was held for the first time. Russian women felt new energy, though there was little they could do. The group of Trubnikova which had been transformed by the exigencies of the time into a charitable organization, "Russian Women's Mutual Charity Society," usually known as the "Women's Society," could not at that time be a women's club or a women's union. Therefore they aimed at helping the cause in a general way. The president, Anna N. Shabanova, a prominent children's physician, devoted all her energy to furthering the women's question. She helped the society organize a library and reading room, and in 1898 living quarters were opened. In 1902 Shabanova obtained permission to call a woman's congress. But the restrictions were such that it took several years to work out a possible program. The congress opened in December 1908 and lasted for seven days. There were about one thousand women from all parts of Russia. The president was Shabanova, the vice-presidents were Olga A. Shapir, a well-known writer, and Anna Filosofova, of whom mention had been

made in connection with the group of Trubnikova.

But before this, during the revolution of 1905, the "All Russian Union for Woman's Suffrage" was organized in Moscow. The Women's Society joined the Union almost immediately, and thus extended its activities from the narrow circle of clubs and charities to the broad realm of woman's suffrage. The Union was hampered in its work by the government, but its moral influence wakened women to a consciousness of their part in life and in the building of the nation.

During the session of the first Duma the Union for Woman's Suffrage and the Women's Society separately presented two petitions for woman's suffrage, one with 5,000 and the other with 4,000 signatures. To the second Duma a petition was presented with 20,000 signatures. The first and the second Dumas sat for so short a time that they never expressed their views upon the woman's question, but it has been established by an inquiry that the majority of members were in favor of equal political and civil rights for women.

The revolution of 1905 also opened the doors of the universities for women. But in 1908, by decree of the Minister of Education, all women save those who had but one year more to finish their courses, were forbidden to attend the universities. In 1910, after the death of Tolstoy, dis-

turbances took place among the students. Police squads were brought into the universities and stayed during the lectures. Students were expelled and deported. The fall of 1910, however, marks the beginning of a movement against the Czar's government, which relented little by little, realizing that again the nation stood united against it. "In spite of the government's policy to suppress higher education," says Kornilov, "many private high educational institutions sprang up; Professor Bernadsky places the number of such institutions at one hundred in 1913, not counting universities and popular courses, and the number of students at one hundred and fifty thousand." At about this time, also, women were again admitted to universities.

Women also progressed in literary and artistic fields. In their novels they discussed the lives of women, faithfully picturing their surroundings and their aspirations. The most prominent women novelists were Catherine Sultanova, Maria Krestovskaya, Vera Olnem, Olga Shapir. Catherine Stchepkina-Kupernik wrote an exceptionally good short history of Russia, as well as other historical books. Lubov Tugan-Baranovskaya was a journalist of distinction. Her mother had founded one of the best magazines, *Mir Bojhiy* (God's World), and she took an active part in the editing

when still a very young girl. For nine years she edited a section of the magazine in which she published a series of instructive articles on social themes. There were also actresses of great prominence, like Vera Komissarjhevskaya and Maria Savina; singers, like Nejhdanova; and painters, like Elizabeth Beom.

The Great War opened to women another field of work, the wider because it had the sanction of the government. And they did not miss their opportunity to give. They went to war as Red Cross nurses and physicians, they served in rear and field hospitals, they worked in canteens and in sanitary trains, they sewed and prepared bandages, they supported and supervised hospitals, they organized soup-kitchens for soldiers' children and temporary quarters for refugees from places occupied by the enemy. And finally, when the might of the Russian military resistance wavered—when propaganda for peace at any price was in progress, and fraternization between enemies in full swing—women organized the Battalion of Death. Maria Botchkareva, a woman of the people, was at its head and one of her closest assistants was the daughter of Admiral Skridlov.

The Revolution of March, 1917, stirred everyone. The woman was accepted as an equal and worked on the same basis as the man, occupying

high and responsible positions. Thus, Countess Panina was Minister of Government Relief. Many clubs were organized. Among the lower classes the revolution had an uplifting effect. The women wanted the recognition of their rights and saw a way to arrive at it by organizing. Everyone wanted to belong to some association. Among many others, Associations of Soldiers' Wives were organized. It was the author's privilege to organize such an association in one of the cities and to show the women a way to help themselves and better their economic conditions. The first steps, however, were extremely difficult. It took two months merely to teach them how to conduct meetings and to make them understand that without silence and order they would not accomplish anything. But the way once shown and grasped, the women went on and did extremely well. They succeeded in having their allowance doubled, opened an employment agency, helped those of their number who could not work, ran a small general and grocery store for their members only, and one year after their first meeting they even owned a small farm consisting of a vegetable garden and of a dairy to supply milk for their children.

These associations were organized with the sole purpose of economic bettering. But the Bolshe-

viki, though not yet in power, could not miss such an opportunity for propaganda; these women were ignorant and the demagogical speeches of the Communists found fertile soil. Therefore, when the Bolshevist Revolution of October, 1917, took place, these women were ready to cooperate. But as they had not had time to acquire education, the speeches aroused their dormant passions and sent through them a wave of destruction. They became commissars, judges, members of the Executive Commission and spies. And in all these capacities, whenever they had power, they used it with the utmost cruelty. The severest sentences at court were passed by women. As spies, they displayed a skill that outshone anything ever heard of Their names, for obvious reasons, are not known; they went by nicknames. "Katka," who came into Siberia with a punitive expedition, was famous for her "refined" espionage.

But the most terrible in their cruelty and mercilessness were the women of the Extraordinary Commission, the purpose of which was to eradicate opposition to the Soviet Government. As one instance among hundreds, here is the story of Rebecca Platinina.

At the time of the war she was head nurse of a small town hospital in the province of Tver. During the revolution she left the hospital and

for some time nothing was heard of her. Then she reappeared when the Terror was in progress in the north of Russia, near Archangel. A member of the Extraordinary Commission, she lived in a railroad car where she held inquests, while the executions were performed outside, close to the car. At the inquests she slapped the faces of her victims, sneered and mocked them, banged on the table with her fist, and shouted briefly but with frenzy: "To execution! To execution! To the wall!" This woman was governed by her passions to the extent of sadism.

Nadiejhda Ostrovskaya was another who, though from different motives, was also governed by her passions. A doctor's daughter, dissatisfied with life and irritated by failures, she gave vent to her wrath during the terrible execution of officers in Sebastopol in 1918, where she was one of the leaders, and became famous for her cruelty. One of the officers who escaped miraculously said: "I know hell now."

There were yet other motives for such deeds of cruelty. Among the members of the Executive Commission there were women who belonged to that extreme left wing of socialist sectarianism for whom there exists no reality in life and no compromises. These women were fanatics, they were ready to sacrifice their most sacred possessions on

the altar of their ideals. One of these, Concordia Gromova, who had spent all her life working for others, who did not spare herself, but who was a Communist by conviction, firmly believed in the high mission of the Executive Commission. Therefore she signed death sentences by the score, organized punitive expeditions, and put whole villages to fire and pillage.

Among those who are Communists by conviction there are other who must not be overlooked, educated and cultured women whose hands are clean from the blood shed in the time of Terror. The most prominent of these is Alexandra M. Kollontay, who all her life has been a party worker, devoting her activities to propagate the ideas of Karl Marx. From the beginning of the Bolshevist régime she has been on the top of the ladder; she was appointed as People's Commissar of Government Relief, organized workingwomen, gave lectures. She has written a number of books and pamphlets, mostly on social questions. Recently she has been appointed Ambassador of Soviet Russia to Norway. Another People's Commissar is Maria F. Andreyeva-Gorky (wife of Maxim Gorky) who supervises all theatres of Soviet Russia, and who also has charge of the disposition abroad of the church treasures requisitioned by the Bolsheviki. She was a well-known artist of

the Moscow Art Theatre before she met Gorky. Mme. Kroupskaya (wife of Lenin) is working in the field of education, while Angelica Balavanova at one time organized a propaganda service of trains which were sent out bearing immense placards advertising the advantages of education.

Fate has waved her wand over the chessboard, and the women of Russia find themselves in changed places. Those who from the beginning of history were leading in the fight for freedom are now relegated to the background. They cannot accept Bolshevism, in spite of their eagerness to build a new Russia. At the very start they remained passively resistant. Then some of them, the Socialist-Revolutionaries, returned to their underground work, and as of old were persecuted, arrested, imprisoned, and shot, only on a larger scale than during Tzarism. Maria Spiridonova, Alexandra Izmailovitch (see pp. 191-92) and many others are back in prison. Last summer at the famous trial of Socialist-Revolutionists, among the twelve sentenced to death by the Bolsheviki were two women—Evgenia Ratner, who had been arrested eight times by the Tzar's government, and Elena Ivanova, a member of the Foreign Organization.

But it is too early and, moreover, too dangerous to speak of the women of non-Bolshevist creed.

The names of many prominent women have been temporarily overlooked in the chaotic conditions that have overwhelmed Russia since 1917. But the past twenty years were productive of many fine talents and personalities which some day, when peace and the perspective of history render impartial judgment possible, will be appreciated at their true worth.

CHAPTER XII

A THOUSAND years ago, in the tenth century, Russian women enjoyed equal freedom and equal rights with men, and their lives were similar. Until the end of the sixteenth century, when serfdom was introduced, the women of all classes lived under the same conditions, except that some were rich and others poor; some lived in palaces, others in shacks; some were secluded, others had their liberty, because there was nowhere to confine them; some spent their lives in leisure, eating and drinking more than they needed; and others labored, often with insufficient food.

By serfdom the peasants were attached to the land they occupied and became the property of the landowners. But even so there was no great change in the conditions of peasant women's lives. It was only from the time of Catherine the Great, when serfdom was most fully developed, that a radical change is to be noticed. It is an irony of fate that Catherine, who was the first to awaken individuality and personality of women, should also have done most to force them into slavery

because of the unlimited power she gave the landowners over their peasants.

We have seen in previous chapters what a life the Russian nobility led in the eighteenth century and the first part of the nineteenth. It naturally considered women as slaves, devoid of any human feelings and emotions. The lot of the peasant woman was hard, but harder still was that of the woman or girl who belonged to the household of a nobleman. Here are extracts from a landowner's household journal in 1763, found in an historical textbook by Mikhail Kovalensky:

"#465. The maid Daria Stepanova is not to receive meat during seven days at Christmas in punishment for unsufficiently heating the study, which is near our bedroom.

"#468. Henceforth Theocla Yakovleva is forbidden to be called by her name, but must be called by everybody a coward and a liar, and whosoever call her by her name shall be mercilessly flogged, receiving five thousand stripes.

"#477. The housekeeper Domna Frolova shall not receive bread for seven days for serving us bad cream."

A landowner of the Pskov province had a prison on his estate, and offending peasants would literally be left to rot in its cells. A girl who refused to listen to his love-making he gave over to be eaten by a dog. Instances of such appalling

cruelty were innumerable, and even the milder cases were terrible. In the *Memoirs of a Revolutionist,* Prince Kropotkin describes the life of the serfs on his father's estate:

"Uliana, the housekeeper, stands in the passage leading to father's room, and crosses herself; she dares neither to advance nor to retreat. At last, having recited a prayer, she enters the room, and reports, in a hardly audible voice that the store of tea is nearly at an end, that there are only twenty pounds of sugar left, and that the other provisions will soon be exhausted.

" 'Thieves, robbers!' shouts my father. 'And you, you are in league with them!' His voice thunders throughout the house. Then he begins to verify the accounts. At the same time he thinks of the hay. Frol is sent to weigh what is left of that, and our step-mother has to be present during the weighing while father calculates how much of it ought to be in the barn. A considerable amount of hay is missing, and Uliana cannot account for several pounds of such and such provisions. Father's voice becomes more and more menacing; Uliana is trembling; but now it is the coachman who enters the room, and is stormed by his master. Father springs at him, strikes him, but he keeps repeating, 'Your Highness must have made a mistake.'

"Father repeats his calculations, and this time it appears that there is more hay in the barn than there ought to be. The shouting continues, father

will not be appeased. He calls in Makar, the piano-tuner and second butler, and reminds him of all his recent sins. He was drunk last week, and must have been drunk yesterday, for he broke half a dozen plates. In fact, the breaking of these plates was the real cause of all the disturbance: our step-mother had reported the fact to father in the morning, and that was why Uliana was received with more scolding than was usually the case, why the verification of the hay was undertaken, and why father now continues to shout that this 'progeny of Ham' deserves all the punishments on earth.

"Of a sudden there is a lull in the storm. My father takes his seat at the table and writes a note. 'Take Makar with this note to the police station, and let a hundred lashes with the birch rod be given him.' "

And Prince Kropotkin, elder, was a good and kind master! His son says that he was considered one of the best by the servants and peasants. To give a hundred lashes for half a dozen broken plates was nothing at all!

"These animals must be continually taught," said the nobility of Russia. There was no law to protect the peasants from the cruelty of their masters. Every slightest fault was punished severely, mostly by flogging. The landowners, as we have seen, had an immense numbers of servants, and

it was considered to their personal credit, if, among their serfs, they had talented musicians, good singers, actors, actresses. It seldom occurred to them that such a man or woman ought to be given freedom and a chance to develop his or her gifts. On the contrary, the possessor took pride in exhibiting his gifted servant, and in publicly showing that he was the owner and would be obeyed, no matter what he should order his vassal to do.

A country priest, in his notes, published in 1830, tells about a landowner who had a choir which sang in his private church. After the service, the master would speak to the members of the choir, and, with a sweet smile, caressing a girl's cheek, would say: "My dear Sasha, you sang out of tune again, and you, Dasha, took A flat instead of A natural." But his gentleness deceived no one, for it was known that the leader of the choir would report to the manager of the estate, who would mercilessly demand an accounting for the singing out of tune. The price was known too: it was twenty-five lashes. In the evening, Sasha and Dasha would have to play in the landowner's private theatre and represent some countess or princess. During the intermission the master would come behind the scenes and smilingly remark: "My dear Sasha, your interpreta-

tion of the character is weak in one point: a countess must carry herself with more dignity." So, between acts, she was flogged by the coachman; and after this Sasha had either to continue to carry herself with great dignity, or dance in a ballet, or sing in a musical comedy.

The landowners took great care in arranging marriages between their peasants. Almost never were marriages contracted with the agreement of both bride and groom, and, if such a marriage ever occurred, it was either by chance or through countless ruses. The usual way for a landowner to arrange marriages was to take a list of inhabitants of one of his villages, select the names of boys of eighteen and girls of sixteen, put them together at random, and order that the couples be united immediately. Supplications were of no avail. Wail as they would, the women gained nothing, the orders were executed. If a girl or a boy tried at the last minute in church to refuse to be married, the wrath of the master, which was known to be even more terrible than a wrecked life, would compel them to consent. Sometimes a girl would commit suicide; then her family was severely punished. Sometimes a man would refuse to obey and would be sent to the recruiting board to be taken as a soldier; he would be put in chains and kept under guard, lest he might

commit suicide—the life of a soldier being so horrible! Sometimes marriage was chosen as a form of punishment. Kropotkin tells of a housemaid of his sisters' who was skillful at embroidery and had refined manners. For this she was married by force to a man who had been kicked by a horse, so that his growth was stunted. His legs were crooked, his feet turned, his nose broken and twisted, his jaw deformed. Thousands of such cases might be related. And as a reward for his services in the matter, the landowner often reserved for himself the privileges of the bridal night.

The emancipation of the serfs in 1861 lightened the burden of the peasant women so far as the landowners were concerned; but poverty, misery, and the cruelty of husbands and fathers were still their lot. Throughout the nineteenth century the clan-family type prevails in Russia; the great majority of the peasants live in large families, including sometimes three or more generations. In these families the patriarchal system reigns, the authority of the head of the family is indisputable. The woman is simply a machine for the bearing of male children—girls being regarded as an unavoidable evil—and for performing the great amount of work set by the family. A married woman is never a full member of the family; she is

a stranger, the property of one of the members, in case of whose death, should she be childless, she may either return to her own family, or remain as a servant, and work until she is worn out. The life of a girl in her own family is not much easier. She has also to do a great amount of work, being assigned to look after a certain unmarried member of the family. Knowing that she will soon be sold into another family, she is preoccupied with fitting herself out for the marriage, for she must show her new relatives that she is able to provide clothing for her husband and children, and must also supply herself, as, once married, she will have no time to work for herself.

In the majority of Russian peasant families the woman not only has to do all the housework, to spin and to weave, to plough, sow, rear and harvest the hemp, but also to work in the fields together with the men. Often she does more work in the fields than a man; she leaves the house at daybreak, carrying the babies, taking a piece of salted black rye bread for all food, and returns in the evening. And her only reward is blows, blows. Her husband often returns drunk, and his first thought is to beat his wife. Sometimes he is ordered to beat her. Her mother-in-law does not like her appearance, which is not cheerful enough to please her; or she has answered back

when scolded; and in the evening the older woman complains to the head of the house, and he orders the husband to give his wife a lesson. If the husband is fond of his wife and in no mood to beat her for so small an offense, the elder of the house administers the birch rod to the disobedient man, who then gets up and gives a much more severe beating to his poor wife.

Instinct prompted the peasant woman unconsciously to struggle against such conditions. She made the same attempt to recover her freedom as did the women of the sixteenth and seventeenth centuries. Her methods were the same, because they were the only methods possible to her—ruse, slander, and continual quarreling. By rendering life in the large family unbearable, the woman sometimes brought her husband to the point of separating from the large family and establishing a small one. Her success was the first step toward freedom. The obvious economic advantages of a small family helped her in her struggle. The fact that there are only two workers in such a family, the husband and the wife, of whom each must show initiative and take responsibility, gave the woman an opportunity to develop her personality. In the small family the wife took care of the house, the poultry, the cow, and the vegetable garden, and had the right to dispose of the money

derived from the sale of these products provided she turned it back for the benefit of the farm, and also provided the taxes had been paid. Unfortunately, though the number of such families has been increasing steadily, especially since the beginning of the twentieth century, they are still a minority if compared with the large families in existence in Russia.

The hard life and extreme poverty of the Russian peasantry, struggling under heavy taxation, drove thousands of girls and women into the towns, to work in factories and as domestic servants, in the hope of earning more money to help out at home. But they only exchanged one evil for another. Factory life is the same the world over: there is no need to describe its hardships in Russia in the latter part of the nineteenth and early in the twentieth centuries. The life of the domestic servant was also far from easy. She was ordered about all day long; scolded without reason; treated as a miserable creature; and slapped sometimes, or even beaten. She had no room of her own, and slept in the kitchen or in some dark recess, often with a sack of straw for a bed; she received wages insufficient even to buy her shoes and dresses. What wonder, then, that many women of the Russian peasantry, even up to the time of the Revolution of 1917, accepted prosti-

tution as a means of livelihood. Some, after saving enough money by this means, would go back to their villages and marry.

Slave to her heavy work, with no rest and very little hope for a better future, the Russian peasant woman met the great war of 1914, which meant to her simply more work and more sacrifice. The Revolution of 1917 opened the vision of more land and better economic conditions, but instinctively she feels that her children need one thing more—education. This she humbly acknowledges when she says: "We are dark people, we do not understand."

Nekrasov gives a true picture of the life of the peasant woman in the latter part of the nineteenth century and the early part of the twentieth:

"Harvest time is at the full:
Oh, Fate of Russian Woman—
  Scarcely is a harder to be found!
It is not strange that you wither before your time,
You, of the all-enduring Russian race
  Much-suffering mother!

"Unbearable the heat; unwooded plain,
Wheatfields, mown meadows and expanse of
    earth
  The sun is mercilessly scorching.
Here a poor woman labors to exhaustion;
A swarm of insects sways about her,
  Stings, tickles, buzzes.

"Lifting the heavy plough
She has cut her naked foot;
  There is no time to stop the blood
For a cry is heard from the next-lying strip of
    ground:
She runs thither, with dishevelled hair—
  The child must be rocked!

"Why do you stand over him, stupefied?
Sing him a song of eternal patience,
  Sing patient mother!
Are they tears, or is it sweat upon her lashes?
Indeed it is hard to tell:
Into this earthen jug corked with a dirty rag
  They will drop—whichever they be.

"Now she puts her parched lips
  Greedily to the jug's mouth—
Do the salt tears taste good, dear,
  Mingled with sour *kvass?*"

CHAPTER XIII

TAKEN in historical perspective, the life of Russian women may be seen as a continual, sometimes sub-conscious struggle against fate. The free Amazon, dominating the men, is brought, through the institution of marriage, the Byzantine church, and the Tartar invasion, down to complete subjection. She resists, however, and it is only step by step that the man makes headway.

Peter the Great's reform made of the Russian woman a rebel in the eyes of her family. The older generation had not changed for several centuries: it was still willful and despotic and believed in education through fear. With seven hundred years of subjection weighing heavily upon her shoulders the Russian woman stands amidst the gross depravity of the seventeenth century, facing patriarchal society, defenseless in spite of law, and ignorant in spite of her superficial polish. Catherine the Great comes to her rescue. Now, at least, there is someone who looks favorably upon her struggle to assert her personality. But it takes a little over fifty years to make it possible for her to step forward as the

equal of the man and to prove that she can compete with him.

Comparing the days of Catherine the Great with those of the liberating reforms of the 'sixties, we are amazed that even so much progress had been made. The Russian woman has grown up under the influence of fear and developed without receiving any education. As a young girl she has no interests, no practical knowledge, nothing that can harden her for the struggle of life. She has only leisure, and she directs all her young forces towards one object—love. We have seen the moral level of the men and also the attitude of the patriarchal system toward marriage. Married life, begun under the despotism of the family, weighs upon her; her husband is a tyrant and she becomes a slave who performs mechanically the household, family, and social duties imposed on her by custom.

But there comes a time for protest. It is a tempestuous protest against the existing order of things which accepts no half measures, and is full of an undefined seeking, a reaching out for something which has not yet assumed precise forms. So the period of the 'sixties dawned—the period of reforms. The woman challenges parental authority, revolts against tradition, studies, travels, contracts fictitious marriages in order to gain her

freedom, works with enthusiasm, unmindful of the fact that though she will gain knowledge, she will have no right to use it—in a word she is fighting for her independence.

But it is only the vanguard of Russian women that is charging ahead; the great bulk has barely started on the road of progress when reaction drives it back. The woman has had no opportunity to use her influence in molding Russian life, but who can blame her? What she has won, she has won alone, having many powerful enemies but few friends, and those strong only in their talents and convictions but having no authority. The period of reforms also was exceedingly short!

She is not discouraged, however. She has tasted freedom and found it worth the fight, so she goes on struggling. She leaves her home, her family, her friends; forsakes the comforts of wealth and becomes one of the people. She knows that education is the only salvation; she wants to give of the knowledge she has acquired. But she finds that, in spite of all her love for the masses, she fails to gain their confidence. She understands at last that nothing is to be gained by mere education, and she valiantly takes up the fight with the government. She faces trial after trial and gains even the respect of her judges. She ac-

cepts the duresses of imprisonment, deportation, hard labor, even death. Silently she bears the insults, the brutality, the tortures of prison life, standing faithfully at her post, and only when she has reached the limit of endurance does she put an end to her own life, but she never deserts the cause, never swerves from her duty. If there are times when she is forced to inaction, she never slackens of her own free will. She knows only one way to give and that is to give unreservedly. She is the symbol of self-abnegation and self-sacrifice. Her hand never trembles when she fires a shot, and with the same coolness she mounts the scaffold. She fights in the ranks of the revolutionaries, but she fights as well in the family, the school, the office, or the store—asserting step by step her independence and her individuality. But above all she fights public opinion, she accepts sneers and rebukes, even insults, but steadily she forges on, knowing that in the end she will succeed.

On the eve of the Great War of 1914 she looks back and sees that her work has borne fruit, that she is accepted as an equal. Only the old absolutism of the government is yet to be overcome. Then comes the war: and once more she throws herself into the work. The country is in

danger, she is needed at the front and in the rear, and again she freely gives, devoting herself to alleviate the suffering.

Suddenly a bright ray of light breaks through the clouds of oppression, treachery, and suffering. The Revolution! Full of hope, the woman looks through the open door to a new era of freedom. Now at last she shall come into her own! But she also realizes that traditions of patriarchal life have not yet been altogether uprooted, that the Revolution could not at one blow wipe away all obstacles to progress, but has only cleared the way. She realizes that a long life of constructive work is before her, that in education lies the salvation of her people, and that her principal task now is to bring up for her country strong children who shall build on the rock of liberty a new empire where there shall be no more suffering.

So today she valiantly steps forward. She has equal suffrage and equal rights with men and she claims them. Side by side with man she labors to build up the Russia of her dreams. But there is too much idealism and not enough practical knowledge in all the efforts. They fail, therefore, and the Second Revolution, the Bolshevist, succeeds. In the tumult produced by the fire of shells and of speeches the vanguard of Russian women has shifted its position—it is now the pas-

sively resistant bulk. Because, faced by the Bolshevist doctrines, against which her traditions and her convictions revolt, the intellectual Russian woman stops amazed and indignant. Not believing that the new government can last long, she busies herself for a while with economic worries and withdraws from active struggle.

Yet there are other women cooperating with the Bolsheviki. A very few are the revolutionists of the extreme left who continue their work as best they can. They occupy responsible positions but try to implant Communism in an educational and constructive way. Others of the same creed are fanatics for whom real life does not exist, who go forward irrespective of obstacles, sacrificing everything, themselves first, on the altar of their ideals. They believe in implanting Communism by active fight and terror, and their hand does not shake when they sign death warrants.

There is another type of woman also—and the greater number—simple and ignorant, who either seeks the attainment of her personal ends or is fired by the demagogical speeches of the new rulers. In her ignorance she accepts unreservedly every statement of the fiery harangue, and it arouses her dormant passions. She has not yet acquired control over her lower nature, she has suffered too much from oppression to believe in

good, and she is too ignorant to discriminate between worthy and unworthy motives. She is suspicious of everyone and everything. Intoxicated by power, spurred by hate, she becomes extreme in her cruelty and mercilessness, sometimes even sadistic. Accepted as an equal, she occupies high positions, sits in judgment, takes part in punitive expeditions, signs death warrants, and by her own hand often shoots her victims. She is successful as a spy because she has known no love, only hate, and her ingenuity is beyond limits when she wants to extort a secret.

It is only on the crest of a passing wave, however, that this type of woman has come to the surface. She is a by-product and not an important factor in the future life of Russia; she is merely a phenomenon of the moment. It is not with her that the issue lies in Russia, but with the woman who has fought in the vanguard, who has sacrificed everything to see the freedom of *every Russian,* and not the freedom of one class at the expense of another.

What is this woman doing in Soviet Russia? How does she react to present conditions? In some cases she goes back to the underground way of fighting the government, is arrested, imprisoned, tortured, and shot.

In other cases she returns to her post—of

teacher, or doctor—where her sense of duty and her loyalty find a broad field for work. Rebellious inwardly, the teacher outwardly submits to all demands, no matter how incongruous; she endures the rudeness of government officials, she struggles along on a salary that can buy food only for a few days; in winter she freezes in an unheated room; she accepts all hardships, but she goes on steadily with her work: she is going to save the children, she is doing her sacred work of saving the future of the country. The medical woman has the same incentive: she is fighting for human life. Her position is hard, she has no medicaments, no nourishing food for her patients, no sanitary conditions, nothing but her intense desire to save life. How often she spends days and nights watching her patient, encouraging in every way, praying for a miracle! How she suffers when she is unable to alleviate the pain, to improve the condition, especially when the patient is a child! Saints and heroines! So these women are called by those who see their work.

Heroines and saints! They are not the only ones. Is not the Russian mother a heroine and a saint in her field? The Bolshevist régime has faced the Russian mother with a changed household status. Wars and the reign of terror have left hundreds of women husbandless and respon-

sible for the support of their families. Reduced circumstances and increased expenses, coupled with the impossibility of getting the needed amount of food, absórb her energies at the start. She has to do her housework, to cook, wash, and darn. She spends most of her day and part of her night standing in line for provisions, but above all she tries her skill in finding money to pay expenses. She first sells her jewelry and silver, then her winter coat, then everything else that has a market. But she is soon at the end of her resources, there is nothing more to sell, and prices are exorbitant. What is she to do? Where is she to find food for her children? She tries here and there without success. She grows desperate. Sometimes she sells herself, sometimes she takes her life and her children's lives. But her despair is not of long duration. The indomitable courage that carried the Russian woman through in former days comes to her aid. She takes heart and sets out to find work. She works now for the government as a non-partisan, and in order to provide enough food she takes up not one job but several. A few hours in one office, a few more in another, and so the day goes by. Tired, she comes home to begin work anew. Late into the night she works, to get up before dawn and start again. And if her children do not get all

the care they are entitled to, does not her example compensate the loss by giving them something more precious in life?

In her struggle with existing conditions the Russian intellectual woman has turned to God to seek consolation and shelter from her hardships. In former days she denied the existence of God and contended that faith was a product of ignorance. And as proof she pointed out the peasant woman with her superstitious and sometimes sub-conscious faith. But now through suffering she herself has come to God and is finding answers to questions that neither the Revolution nor life have given her. And in her service of God she is giving unreservedly, as is her habit. In this time of persecution of religion and of the church, she bravely steps forward, supports the church, encourages the parish, organizes processions of protest.

The Bolshevist régime brought to the Russian woman extreme suffering, both physical and moral. It was a fiery trial through which she is emerging as gold purified of its dross. The Russian woman on the whole is manifesting a marvelous spirit, a spirit based upon a glimpse of the true God, upon self-abnegation and self-sacrifice, upon a tremendous sense of duty and loyalty; a spirit based upon a true sense of nationalism, upon

indomitable courage; a spirit of cheerfulness, of the will to carry on in spite of all and try to perfect life through a new generation; a spirit strengthened and steeled by hardships, potent with the vision of the new era.

Still faint in the distance a new Russia may be glimpsed, a Russia the promise of which is made certain by the amazing will of her women, who will take a full share in giving to the world a new, strong, and wholesome people.

THE END